

EVAN MAWDSLEY AND STEPHEN WHITE



# THE SOVIET ELITE FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND ITS  
MEMBERS, 1917-1991

OXFORD

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## Preface

The year 1953, when Stalin died, fell halfway between the birth of the Soviet system in 1917 and its collapse in 1991. In 1954 the system began to ‘thaw’ and members of the Soviet elite appeared at receptions in foreign embassies. The British ambassador to Moscow, Sir William Hayter, recalled what a change this seemed from earlier days:<sup>1</sup>

In Stalin’s time they had been distantly visible, squat, flat-capped figures, on Lenin’s tomb during ceremonial parades, and at wartime banquets they had been glimpsed rather more closely, muttering to each other and obediently drinking toasts when the Leader proposed them. But they could hardly be distinguished except by the presence or absence of moustaches or spectacles; they were approximately the same size and shape, short, powerful men, whom no one could really tell apart.

As things turned out, a degree of impersonality—due to Soviet secrecy and Western attitudes—would continue even after the thaw. Twenty-five years after Hayter one of the most influential specialists in elite studies argued that ‘[i]t is only when we can begin to see that the system is staffed by real people with real hopes and values and interests—and changing ones over time—that we will be in a position to break away from our old abstractions’.<sup>2</sup> Now that the Soviet era has passed into history it is even less satisfactory to see the system as one run by ‘men whom no one could really tell apart’, either at any one point in that history or across the whole span of years; nor is it necessary to do so, given the access we have to party archives, to memoirs and other sources, and in many cases to members of the elite themselves.

The present study is unprecedented, not only in terms of the sources on which it has been able to draw, but also in its chronological scope: it is a collective biography of the Soviet political elite over the entire seventy-four years of Communist rule. A study of this kind is crucial to our understanding of the Soviet system, given the disproportionate influence its ruling elite was able to command. Throughout the Soviet era it was a Communist Party that held power. And throughout the same period it was a small minority that held power within

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Hayter, *A Double Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), 103.

<sup>2</sup> Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1980), 15.

the party, using the party's bureaucratic machinery to impose their will upon lower levels of the party itself and upon all forms of organized life within the wider society. There were no general elections—at least until the late 1980s—at which a ruling party could lose office; there was no press that could criticize their actions; and there were no independent courts through which those who ruled could be called to account. This meant that political power, in the largest country in the world, was for the whole of the Communist era in the hands of a relatively small group of people. This was for Trotsky 'the bureaucracy', for Milovan Djilas the 'new class', and for latter-day critics 'the nomenklatura'.<sup>3</sup> For others still, it was an 'elite', and by the late 1980s Russian writers were themselves calling it an *elita*, or even a 'ruling [*praviashchaia*] elite', in characterizing their own society.<sup>4</sup> In each case what was being referred to was a group that had come to control the state in its own interests—after a revolution that was supposed to have extended the management of society to the society itself.

Unlike its counterparts in most other systems, the Soviet elite was a ruling group that could be reasonably clearly defined. In a Western society there were competing hierarchies based on wealth, political power, professional status, and 'spiritual' authority. But in a society of the Soviet kind it was the regime itself that chose—through the *nomenklatura* appointments system—the people who occupied the highest-ranking positions in government, in the economy, and in public life. It was clear that those who were chosen were important because they were also members of the party bodies through which this form of domination was exercised. To be sure, if societies are seen as pyramids there will always be a question—even for the Soviet case—about how far from the apex the defining line of the elite should be drawn. In looking at the Soviet elite we might have taken just the top leadership, members of the party Politburo and Secretariat; we might even have looked at all members of the Communist Party.<sup>5</sup> Or we might have worked out a complex—and again contentious—set of rules to determine which key posts defined 'the elite'. Stalin himself, the party's personnel expert, spoke in 1937 about the '*generalitet* [corps of generals] of our party', which consisted of 3,000–4,000 top leaders.<sup>6</sup> We have chosen instead to define the elite as the members of the

<sup>3</sup> L. Trotsky, *Predannaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow: NII Kul'tury, 1991); Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (London: Praeger, 1957); Michael Voslensky, *Nomenklatura: Anatomy of the Soviet Ruling Class* (London: Bodley Head, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. by Georgii Shakhnazarov in *Tseny svobody. Reformatsiia Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnik* (Moscow: Rossika/Zevs, 1993), 155: '[El'tsin] had already [in 1986] entered the ruling party *elita*, being a member of the CC.'

<sup>5</sup> Well-known studies exist in both these areas: John Löwenhardt et al., *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Politburo* (London: UCL Press, 1992); T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

<sup>6</sup> 'Materialy fevral'sko-martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1937 goda', *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 3, p. 14. In terms of the tsarist army the *generalitet* was the pool all those officers who had reached the rank of general. Stalin also used the term 'ruling layers' (*rukovodiasbchie sloi*) for these 'highest leaders'. Below the *generalitet* were 30,000–40,000 middle-ranking leaders (*srednie rukovoditeli*), the party 'officer corps' (*ofitserstvo*). Below them were 100,000–150,000 'junior commanders', 'our party NCOs' (*unter-ofitserstvo*).

Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. The Central Committee was the regime's own definition of the elite, and it has the great advantage of being clear-cut—a person either was or was not in the Central Committee. Some 1,932 people were members (full and candidate) of the Central Committee between 1917 and 1991. Biographical materials are relatively good at this level, and the group is small enough to be manageable using computer technology.

The top leadership, the Politburo and Secretariat, were members of the Central Committee; in its early years they represented a substantial proportion of its membership. At the other extreme, from the time of Khrushchev a small but growing number of the Central Committee were 'token members' or mass representatives of the party rank and file—record-breaking dairymaids or crane-operators. They were included so that the party's leading bodies had some representation from the social groups whose interests they claimed to promote; this also ensured that there were some women and young people among the CC's increasing membership. But beyond these token members, the Central Committee was not a collection of individuals; it was a collection of people holding the positions that the regime itself defined as the most important. The CC was, for this reason, a collection of the politically influential by virtue of the positions they occupied—the government ministers and regional first secretaries, the ambassadors, generals, and policemen, the editors, the leaders of trade unions and the directors of the largest enterprises, the leaders of organized youth, the President of the Academy of Sciences and an occasional writer. The 'mix' of elite posts would change from time to time, and this is an important feature of our analysis, but in general these were the top levels of the *nomenklatura*, in Russian the *nomenklaturnye verkhushki*.<sup>7</sup> This was the level of the elite which the Central Committee represented, and this is the subject of our book.

Our wish for a long-term study is served by an institutional continuity which—in Soviet terms at least—was remarkable: the Central Committee existed as an organ of 'government' for over seventy years. The Central Committee membership was selected at congresses of the Communist Party, and usually stayed in place until the next congress. There were twenty-two Central Committees altogether in our era, chosen at congresses from 1917 to 1990. Each Central Committee was a 'snapshot' of the Soviet elite at one point in time. It is important, however, to remain aware of major changes in its size over the entire era. The 1986 Central Committee (the largest) had 307 full members and 170 candidates, while the Central Committee of 1917 was one-fifteenth the size, with twenty-one full members and nineteen candidates. Clearly, the net was cast much wider as the system evolved. And up to the mid-1920s the membership of the Central Committee changed annually, because congresses were held almost every year. Later there were bigger gaps, especially between 1939 and 1952.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. use of this term in O. V. Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1996), 230.



Finally, the Central Committee makes an appropriate object of study because of its place within the Soviet system. It was more than a list of notables; it was an institution that was elected by the party congress to exercise its functions until the next congress was convened. From the point of view of the party rules of 1917 the Central Committee had great powers: '[it] represents the party in relations with other parties and institutions, organizes the various institutions of the party and guides their activities . . . distributes the forces and funds of the party and manages the central treasury of the party.' After the party took power in Russia the proviso was added to the 1919 rules that the CC 'guide[d] the work of the central soviet and public organizations through party fractions'. These powers continued in the various versions of the party rules up to the very end of the Soviet era. In an especially erudite passage Stalin once spoke of 'the Central Committee . . . which directs all our Soviet and Party organizations . . . In this *areopagus* is concentrated the wisdom of our Party' (the *areopagus* was the hill where the Athenian council met). For Mikhail Gorbachev, half a century later, it was still the party's 'brain'; for his adviser Georgii Shakhnazarov it was the 'brain and motor of the entire system of power'. For one of the Central Committee's own members, speaking as late as 1989, the very *concept* of the Central Committee was 'sacred'.<sup>8</sup>

The first six chapters of this volume are broadly chronological, discussing this Central Committee elite in the Revolution and its immediate aftermath, in the 1920s and 1930s, under High Stalinism, and at the time of Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev. We are concerned with several features of this most distinctive of ruling groups, and these features are reflected in the structure of the chronological chapters. We are concerned, first of all, with nature of the elite as a group. How large was the elite group? To what extent was it being renewed? What were the characteristics of the elite in each period? How old were they? How many were women? How many were Russians, or Jews, or graduates of higher educational institutions? How had they changed from earlier periods?

An understanding of the Soviet elite cannot be achieved only at aggregate level: such an approach leads at best to 'old abstractions', at worst to empty and obscure empiricism. We are concerned, in addition, with the characteristics of the political elite as individuals. In the second part of each chapter we have focused on the careers of a small selection of its members, using archives, memoirs, photographs, and interviews; these are our 'faces in the crowd'. There are two or three of them in each chapter, fifteen in all. They range from the Old Bolshevik Nikolai

<sup>8</sup> *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 9th edn., 15 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1983–9), i. 589–91; ii. 201–9; I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1951), 107 f.; V. I. Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak . . . Iz dnevnikha chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Sovet veteranov knigoizdaniya, 1995), 337 (quoting Gorbachev); Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody*, 501; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 4, p. 85 (Aleksandr Chakovskii, speaking at the December 1989 Central Committee plenum).

Krestinskii to a Komsomol and trade-union leader born sixty years after him, Viktor Mishin. We consciously chose elite members who were not among the best-known Soviet leaders; these were, if the reader will pardon the apparent contradiction, ‘rank and file’ members of the elite. For each period people were selected who are of interest in themselves and about whom sufficient biographical or autobiographical information is available. We also chose, taking the fifteen as a whole, individuals who were representatives of larger groups, both historical and functional: there are, among others, an Old Bolshevik ‘undergrounder’, a Ukrainian activist, several industrial ministers, several regional party leaders (*obkom* first secretaries), a general, a youth leader, and so on.

In the third section of the chapter we consider the way the Central Committee used the powers already alluded to, as the supposed ‘brain’ of the party and a political forum of the elite. The Central Committee plenary meeting (*plenium*) represented the national elite in its decision-making capacity, and this was something that not even Stalin could afford to ignore. This book is not intended to provide a detailed narrative of Soviet politics, but we have sought, in each of these chapters, to identify the changing contours of decision-making at this leading level of the party hierarchy, mapping the ebb and flow of its meetings and resolutions.<sup>9</sup> Stalin used the Central Committee to strengthen his hold on power; under Khrushchev, most conspicuously in 1957, it was used to overrule rivals in the top party leadership; and under Gorbachev it began to recover some of the importance it had earlier enjoyed, as its members began to challenge official policies and to press for a greater degree of influence upon their formulation. The failure effectively to institutionalize the role of the Central Committee within the party was a sign of the difficulties that the elite had in establishing its power *vis-à-vis* the top leadership (or the dictator himself). It was also part of a wider failure to negotiate a relationship between the party leadership and its rank and file, and between the regime as a whole and ordinary citizens, that each of them would be able to regard as acceptable. In the final part of Chapter 6 we ask whether the Central Committee could have become part of the process of ‘democratization’ that began to gain momentum in the late 1980s, and whether it could have served as a means by which its own members could acquire a greater degree of influence over party policy.

We move on, in Chapters 7 and 8, to an overview, looking at some of the larger questions that arise from the entire experience of rule through a political elite based on the Communist Party. In Chapter 7 we ask how representative the Central Committee was of Soviet society, of the party’s mass membership and, at the

<sup>9</sup> The records of CC plenums exist in a variety of forms, from stenographer’s notes to a printed text; see A. N. Artizov and O. V. Naumov, ‘Nekotorye problemy publikatsii dokumentov plenumov TsK VKP(b)-KPSS’, *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, no. 4, 1998, pp. 66–76. J. Arch Getty, ‘Samokritika Rituals and the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933–38’, *Russian Review*, 58: 1 (Jan. 1999), 49–70, discusses the use of language in one remarkable period of the CC’s history.

other extreme, the top party leadership. We also consider how privileged was the party elite that was represented in the Central Committee. The view of Andrei Gromyko's son was probably typical of the elite's self-view: the 'overwhelming majority' had worked 'honestly and unsparingly', and it was thanks to them that the USSR had won its victory over Nazi Germany and then engaged in post-war reconstruction.<sup>10</sup> But even at the beginning of the Soviet experience some had acquired material advantages that marked them out from the mass of party members, not to mention the population as a whole, making them the functional equivalent of a capitalist ruling class. In Chapter 8 we consider the flow of generations into the Central Committee over the whole era, and the historical role of this elite. And finally we ask to what extent the party elite maintained their position into the post-communist period.

Throughout our discussion we have emphasized several key concepts. One of these is turnover or holdover: in other words, the rate at which the membership of the Central Committee changed from congress to congress, and sometimes between congresses.<sup>11</sup> In ordinary circumstances candidates could hope to become full members, and to maintain their membership as long as they retained the position in the party or the state that had entitled them to it. But there were variations in the rates of turnover, as new leaderships consolidated their position. And there were more irregular patterns of change—indeed, *very* irregular ones—particularly in the earlier decades of party rule.

Turnover or holdover is related to another central concept in our discussion, the 'job-slot' system, which denotes the process by which the Central Committee became an increasingly predictable collection of the occupants of key posts rather than of individuals who enjoyed political influence in their own right. One of the first to identify this process was Robert V. Daniels, based on the assumption (which we share) that there was an 'organic and automatic connection between [a] specific set of offices and the Central Committee status of their incumbents', and that the Central Committee could accordingly be seen as a 'well-defined and quite stable set of leading job slots whose occupants enjoyed the elite status conferred by Central Committee membership as long as and only as long as they occup[ied] their respective offices'.<sup>12</sup> The same principles applied to candidate as to full

<sup>10</sup> Anatolii Gromyko, *Andrei Gromyko. V labirintakh Kremliia. Vospominaniia i razmysleniia syna* (Moscow: Avtor, 1997), 207.

<sup>11</sup> Properly speaking, up until 1990 there could be no addition to the Central Committee membership between congresses, but there could be promotions from candidate to full voting membership, and there were also occasional departures from the rules, as when the 18th Party Conference in 1941 not only promoted candidates to full membership but also elected entirely new full members. For a general discussion of turnover see Thomas W. Casstevens and James R. Ozinga, 'The Soviet Central Committee Since Stalin: A Longitudinal View', *American Journal of Political Science*, 18: 3 (Aug. 1974), 559–68.

<sup>12</sup> Robert V. Daniels, 'Office Holding and Elite Status: The Central Committee of the CPSU', in Paul Cocks *et al.* (eds.), *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 78.

membership of the Central Committee, and to membership of the Central Auditing Commission.<sup>13</sup> One consequence of this relationship between 'job slots' and membership of the Central Committee was a steady increase in the size of the Central Committee, as the increasing complexity of the administrative and economic system generated an increasing number of posts that the party leadership regarded as sufficiently important to include within the ruling circle. If members vacated the 'job slot' that gave them Central Committee membership they were entitled to remain on the Central Committee (and generally did) until the following party congress. There were, however, important and dramatic exceptions. One came during the Purges; another was in the spring of 1989, when nearly a hundred of these 'dead souls' were persuaded to resign.

We have paid particular attention to the role of political generations. Studies of Western political systems have themselves emphasized the importance of particular cohorts of leaders or of voters: a 'New Deal generation' in the United States,<sup>14</sup> or a 'generation of 1968' who were trying, twenty or thirty years later, to reconcile their youthful radicalism with the demands of a mortgage and a growing family. The Soviet system has been marked out no less clearly by a flow of generations.<sup>15</sup> Each was marked by a particular set of life experiences: for the earliest the underground revolutionary movement, the Revolution itself, and the Civil War, for rather more the years of economic transformation and Stalinist repression, and for the largest number the searing experience of the Second World War. Russians themselves identified a further group, the *shbestidesiatniki* ('people of the 1960s') or 'children of the 20th Congress', who had been inspired by the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 and by the process of de-Stalinization it had initiated and who finally reached elite positions in the 1980s. In a pioneering work, the Soviet demographer Boris Ulanis traced one of these age cohorts from its starting-point in 1906 to the late 1960s. Another study, rather later, traced the destinies of the cohort born in 1924, the year of Lenin's death.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For reasons of space and consistency we do not deal in this volume with the Central Auditing Commission (*Tsentral'naia revizionnaia komissii*); it did not have the same continuity over the whole Soviet period as the Central Committee. Nominally a body concerned with party housekeeping and discipline, the commission served in practice in the later Soviet period as a 'sort of honorable-mention category for jobholders whose slots [e]ll just short of candidate status' (Daniels, 'Office Holding', 85).

<sup>14</sup> For example Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), identify three key voter cohorts: pre-New Deal, New Deal, and post-New Deal (p. 23).

<sup>15</sup> For an overview see John D. Nagle, 'A New Look at the Soviet Elite: A Generational Model of the Soviet System', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 3: 1 (1975), 1–13; more fully, John D. Nagle, *System and Succession: The Social Bases of Political Elite Recruitment* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> B. Ts. Ulanis, *Istoriia odnogo pokoleniia (sotsial'no-demograficheskii ocherk)* (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), 86. For the 1924 cohort see Dmitrii Kvok, *Eto bylo davno . . .* (Moscow: Luch, 1994). More recently still, a group of Russian and French sociologists has begun to interview the various members of 68 families in order to trace patterns of inter-generational mobility: V. Semenova and E. Foteeva (eds.), *Sud'by liudei. Rossiia XX vek. Biografi semei kak ob'ekty sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia* (Moscow: Institut sotsiologii RAN, 1996), 9.

In this book we have made a simple division into four generations, born in successive periods of twenty years. The first generation, as we have defined them, were born before 1900, and mostly after 1880; roughly speaking, they were the Old Bolsheviks, who had reached adulthood by 1917. They dominated Soviet affairs until they were devastated by Stalin's terror in 1937–8, and carried out not one but two revolutions: the October 1917 Revolution and the social revolution of the late 1920s and 1930s. The second generation, born between 1901 and 1920, is sometimes known as the 'Brezhnev generation', but also as the 'class of '38'. This was the generation that was educated in the period of the Five-Year Plans and came into its own after the Purges of 1937–8. It was the generation that was numerically dominant at leading levels of the party until the 1970s, presiding over the dismantling of Stalinism but also over a gradual recentralization of power that had led, by the time of Brezhnev's death, to almost total immobilism. The third generation, born between 1921 and 1940, included Mikhail Gorbachev and others who had been influenced by the 20th Party Congress. This was a generation that had begun to reach responsible positions in the 1970s, but which was barred from the highest levels by Brezhnev's 'stability of cadres'. Its moment of dominance—as it turned out, a brief one—was after 1985. *Perestroika* led to a near-total replacement of the political elite that had held power through the years of 'stagnation' and to a recasting of the institutions through which they had exercised that power. The political impact of our fourth generation, born after 1940, was the most limited, but this was the generation that carried through into the post-communist period and it was also the generation of the leadership that 'might have been', who were elected to the Central Committee at the party's last congress in 1990.<sup>17</sup>

We began this study, under the general title of the 'Soviet Elite Project', ten years ago. The transformation in the opportunities to study the Soviet system since that time has been no less dramatic than the collapse of that system itself. In the first place, the party archives were opened, at least in principle on the same basis as public archives in any other developed nation. One of us (Stephen White) still remembers his first visit in the spring of 1992 to what used to be the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, which had become the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of the Documentation of Contemporary History (RTsKhIDNI). 'What would you like,' he was asked, 'the Stalin papers or the Politburo minutes?' 'A cognac,' he replied, overwhelmed by this sudden change. The Russian state archives, of which the former Institute is now a part, still present many difficulties

<sup>17</sup> For a chronologically narrower period Jerry Hough also identified four generations: a Brezhnev generation, born between 1900 and 1909; a 1910–18 generation, too young to have experienced rapid career advancement during the late 1930s; a wartime generation, consisting of 'those who entered adulthood just before or during World War II'; and a post-war generation, most of whom had been born after 1925; see his *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, chap. 3.

to the researcher. These include the possibility that they may not be open because they have not been able to pay their electricity bills; there is a relative lack of finding aids, and more recently there has been some tightening up in conditions of access. On the other hand, the Soviet system had a powerful propensity to preserve rather than to discard, and the archives were well staffed (and relatively little used) until the 1990s. The influence of the archival documents is apparent in everything that has been written about the Soviet system since that time. They have made a fundamental contribution to this study, not simply for the period from the Revolution up to 1952 (covered by RTsKhIDNI) but also for the subsequent period, many records for which are held in what has become the Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD). The latter was formerly the working archive of the General Department of the Central Committee itself.

Archives, of course, are not only party archives, and not only written archives. We have made use, in addition, of the records that are held in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) and of the photographs that are held in the Russian State Archive of Cinema and Photographic Documents (RGAKFD) at Krasnogorsk, on the outskirts of Moscow (it is from these archives that we have drawn many of our illustrations). Sound archives are also available, although there are very few that relate directly to the proceedings of the Central Committee and none that we felt it necessary to consult for the purposes of this study (apparently just three plenums were recorded for posterity, those of December 1959, November 1962, and July 1963).<sup>18</sup>

Access to written sources was not the only remarkable feature of the early 1990s. Transcripts of the recordings that were made for a series of BBC programmes on the 'second Russian revolution' were consulted in London.<sup>19</sup> Soviet oral history had made relatively limited progress by this time, but we have been able to use (for instance) published transcripts of recordings that were made for the former Central Party Archives with some prominent figures of the Khrushchev period.<sup>20</sup> Far more important, we were able to obtain interviews ourselves with some of the members of our elite group, although these were naturally confined to the later period.<sup>21</sup> We sought access to all the surviving members of the CC who had been elected or re-elected between 1966 and 1986, and made contact with about a hundred individuals, many of whom provided very extended interviews (our

<sup>18</sup> *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv zvukozapisei SSSR: ocherk-putevoditel'* (Moscow: GAU, 1991),

19.

<sup>19</sup> The published version was Angus Roxburgh, *The Second Russian Revolution* (London: BBC, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> See N. A. Barsukov, introduction, 'Khrushchevskie vremena', in V. A. Kozlov *et al.* (eds.), *Neizvestnaia Rossiia. XX vek*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Istoricheskoe nasledie, 1992), 270–304. For an overview see D. Khubkova *et al.* (eds.), 'After Glasnost: Oral History in the Soviet Union', in Luigi Passinieri (ed.), *Memory and Totalitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 89–101.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen White, Olga Kryshтанovskaia, Igor Kukolev, Evan Mawdsley, and Pavel Saldin, 'Interviewing the Soviet Elite', *Russian Review*, 55: 2 (Apr. 1996), 309–16.

discussions with Iakov Riabov, Sverdlovsk first secretary and later a Secretariat member, took place on more than ten separate occasions and lasted twenty-seven hours, although interviews were more typically of between three and five hours' duration). Interviews were conducted in association with collaborators at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in some cases with our own participation, over 1992 and 1993; they were tape-recorded, and transcribed for further analysis. There were two main groups of interviewees: 'ministers', who had typically spent their working life in a single industry, and (party) 'secretaries', who were more likely to move about the country and to take on a variety of responsibilities; but we also interviewed Komsomol leaders, a general, an admiral, and a KGB chairman, several ambassadors, the rector of Moscow University, party journalists, and a 'token' worker.<sup>22</sup>

We have, in addition, made the fullest possible use of printed sources, including the proceedings of party meetings, published statistics and biographical directories, local and national party histories, obituaries, and the memoir literature. The late 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s, Hayter's time of 'short, powerful men, whom no one could really tell apart', was also the period most poorly served by contemporary reference and biographical sources. For the 1950s to the 1980s there were much better sources of information, such as the parliamentary handbook, *Deputaty Verkhovnogo soveta*, which covered the large number of Central Committee members who were also Supreme Soviet Deputies,<sup>23</sup> as well as some excellent Western reference sources.<sup>24</sup> The press was also an important source, and for this

<sup>22</sup> The methodology of elite interviews is considered in George Moyser and Margaret Wagstaffe (eds.), *Research Methods for Elite Studies* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1987), and Rosanna Hertz and Jonathan B. Imber (eds.), *Studying Elites Using Qualitative Methods* (London: Sage, 1995). Interview methods in the Russian context are examined in S. A. Belianovskii, *Metodika i tekhnika fokusirovannogo interv'iu* (Moscow: Nauka, 1993). An interview-based investigation of the Polish ruling elite in the post-war period that has served as a model for our own work was undertaken by Teresa Toranska, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1987). Other exercises of this kind have more usually been based upon the experience of 'ordinary people': see e.g. Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970). A recent study has, however, drawn its evidence from interviews with those who were responsible for key economic decisions in the late Soviet period: see Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovich, *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System: An Insiders' History* (Armonk NY: Sharpe, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> *Deputaty Verkhovnogo soveta* was published by the publishers of *Izvestiia* at approximately four-five year intervals to coincide with elections to the USSR Supreme Soviet. There was no regular open publication for the Central Committee, but some full listings appeared in the 1980s, e.g. *Sostav tsentral'nykh organov KPSS, izbrannykh XXVI s'ezdom partii: Spravochnik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1982). For insights into the shortcomings of Soviet biographical reference sources see the introduction by Vladimir Ivkin to 'Rukovoditeli Sovetskogo pravitel'stva (1923–1991): Istoriko-biograficheskaiia spravka', *Istchnik*, 1996, no. 4, pp. 152–4.

<sup>24</sup> Herwig Kraus (ed.), *The Composition of the Leading Organs of the CPSU (1952–1982): CPSU CC Politburo and Secretariat Members; CPSU CC Full and Candidate Members; CPSU Central Auditing Commission Members* ([Munich]: Radio Liberty, [1982]); Herwig Kraus, *Sostav rukovodiasbchikh organov KPSS* ([Munich]: Radio Liberty, 1977); Borys Levytsky, *The Soviet Political Elite* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1970); H. E. Schulz et al., *Who Was Who in the USSR* (Metuchen NJ: Scarecrow, 1972).

we have also made use of the *Soviet Biographic Archive*, which consists of about a million newspaper cuttings relating to about 50,000 prominent figures in the USSR over the post-war period.<sup>25</sup>

From the period of *glasnost*, roughly from 1988, additional biographical information began to appear, as well as much more about elite politics.<sup>26</sup> Very full details appeared about the 1986 and 1990 Central Committee; indeed, for some senior figures of this time there was even American-style information about wives and children, and grandchildren.<sup>27</sup> As for the *early* Soviet elite, it was relatively small, and before the curtain of Stalinist secrecy descended, relatively candid sources existed, like the *Granat* encyclopedia and the early volumes of the first edition of the *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia*.<sup>28</sup> By a twist of fate, de-Stalinization under Khrushchev, and even the more modest revelations of the Brezhnev decades, spotlighted the Old Bolshevik martyrs of the first twenty years of Soviet power, while leaving the later Stalinists in the dark.<sup>29</sup> For systematic information on this period the third edition of the *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (published 1969–78) was especially useful. The 1934 Central Committee was a focus of biographical material which emerged under Gorbachev's *glasnost*.<sup>30</sup> The most difficult periods, the late 1920s and from the late 1930s to 1952, had to be covered for this book by a range of sources, some of them compiled by Russians in the *glasnost* period, and some by Westerners.<sup>31</sup> Other gaps were filled in part by the newly opened archives, especially questionnaires filled in by party congress delegates

<sup>25</sup> The Archive was produced in microfiche by Chadwyck-Healey in association with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Hoover Institution, Stanford Cal.

<sup>26</sup> Especially valuable was 'Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS partii—Politbiuro (Prezidiuma), Orgbiuro, Sekretariata TsK (1919–1990 gg.)', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, pp. 69–136; a corrected version was published as *Politbiuro, Orgbiuro, Sekretariat TsK RKP(b)—VKP(b)—KPSS: Spravochnik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990). See also A. Chernev, *229 kremlevskikh vozhdei. Politbiuro, Orgbiuro, Sekretariat TsK Kommunisticheskoi partii v litsakh i tsifrakh* (Moscow: Rodina, 1996). Important for state officials is Ivkin, 'Rukovoditeli', *Istochnik*, 1996, no. 4, pp. 152–92; no. 5, pp. 135–60, and the appendix to T. P. Korzhikhina, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i ego uchrezhdeniia: Noiabr' 1917 g.—dekabr' 1991 g.* (Moscow: Ros. gos. gumanitarnyi universitet, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> For 1986: 'Rukovodiashchie organy Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 1, pp. 9–31; 'Sostav Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS', *ibid.*, no. 2, pp. 43–114; no. 5, pp. 45–53; no. 6, pp. 21–70. For 1990: 'Politbiuro i sekretariat Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS', *ibid.*, 1990, no. 8, pp. 6–62; 'Sostav Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS', *ibid.*, no. 10, pp. 28–51; no. 11, pp. 31–62; no. 12, pp. 27–56.

<sup>28</sup> The most accessible version of *Granat* is *Deiateli SSSR i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia Rossiia: Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Granat* (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1989; originally published 1929). The first edition of the *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia* was published from 1927 to 1947.

<sup>29</sup> Khrushchev-era revelations are translated in Boris Levytsky (comp.), *The Stalinist Terror of the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974).

<sup>30</sup> The most useful source is 'O sud'be chlenov i kandidatov v chleny TsK VKP(b), izbrannogo XVII s'ezdom partii', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 12, pp. 82–113.

<sup>31</sup> An especially useful guide through the institutional thickets of the late 1920s and early 1930s is R. W. Davies *et al.* (eds.), *Soviet Government Officials, 1922–41: A Handlist* (Birmingham: CREES, 1989); unfortunately this deals only with central government.



(present and future Central Committee members) and files on the pre-1958 Supreme Soviet deputies.<sup>32</sup>

Memoir-writing has become something of a growth industry in the 1990s, as former leaders do their best to shape the received version of their period of rule. Naturally most of these memoirs refer to the final decades of the Soviet era, but some recollections exist relating to earlier periods, of which the most significant are the 'memoirs' of Khrushchev, Molotov, and Kaganovich.<sup>33</sup> Russian memoirs, like those from other countries, differ not simply in their assessments but also in the facts themselves. At the same time, some of the memoirs are documentary in character, which gives them an enduring value that is independent of the sometimes self-serving text. Some others were written at an earlier stage and simply published after the end of communist rule, without any attempt to justify the actions of the author from the perspective of a very different system.<sup>34</sup>

Assembling and analysing all this information was made possible by the use of computer technology. The foundation of the Soviet Elite Project was a computer database of over 30,000 records, covering the life histories of all members of the Central Committee over the whole of the Soviet era. Even with the rich resources available the data are decidedly 'fuzzy'. Bearing in mind our intention to take an overall view of the Soviet elite and our historical approach, we did not feel it was appropriate to base the study on an unnecessarily technical statistical analysis.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, without database technology it would simply have been impossible to have kept track of nearly 2,000 elite members across the twentieth century.

A few remarks need to be made about the conventions that we have employed. Dates before March 1918 are in 'old style', which was thirteen days behind the Western calendar. For transliteration we have favoured a simplified version of the Library of Congress system, other than for well-established names and places. We have tried to avoid most of the acronyms that were generated by the Soviet administrative system. One final, but important technical point is that strictly speaking a person was either a 'member' (*chlen*) or a 'candidate' (*kandidat v chleny*)

<sup>32</sup> The archives were also useful for certain kinds of information not made available in Soviet sources even where other detail was provided; an especially significant gap in the printed sources was data on nationality.

<sup>33</sup> N. S. Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); *The Last Testament: Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974); and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990). There is now a definitive Russian text: N. S. Khrushchev, *Uremia. Liudi. Ulost*; 4 vols. (Moscow: Moskovskie Novosti, 1999). F. I. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym; Iz dnevnika F. Chueva*, (Moscow: Terra, 1991). Lazar' Kaganovich, *Pamiatnye zapiski rabochego, kommunistabol'shevika, profsoiuznogo, partiinogo i sovetsko-gosudarstvennogo rabotnika* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> For example N. S. Patolichev, *Sovest'iu svoei ne postupis'* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995).

<sup>35</sup> For a relevant example showing the possibilities and limitations of the approach, see Karl M. van Meter *et al.*, 'Multimethod Analysis: Official Biographies of Members of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party', *Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, 33 (Dec. 1991), 20–37. This article in any event only deals with the 1980s.

of the Central Committee; we have used ‘full member’ and ‘candidate member’ where the distinction is relevant, but have otherwise used ‘member’ to cover both categories.

Finally we must acknowledge institutions and colleagues that made this book and the larger Soviet Elite Project possible. Above all, we are grateful to the United Kingdom Economic and Social Science Research Council, who provided three generous awards, R231491, R232557, and R232900. These provided for, respectively, the creation of a database on the Central Committee of 1917–90, the creation of a database on the Central Committee of 1990, and biographical work (including interviews) on the Brezhnev leadership. The Nuffield Foundation provided assistance to cover the costs of transcribing tapes of our interviews with former Central Committee members. We also benefited at various point in our research from the generous advice of colleagues, notably David Lane and T. H. Rigby. We received much concrete help at an early stage from the staff of the Soviet Data Bank based at the University of California, Riverside, especially J. Arch Getty, William Chase, and Charles Weatherall. Similar assistance was provided by the team at Birmingham University who, under R. W. Davies, were preparing a guide to Soviet government officials in the 1922–41 period.<sup>36</sup> The staff at the relevant Soviet archives, the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of the Documentation of Contemporary History, the Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation, and the State Archive of the Russian Federation, and the Russian State Archive of Cinema and Photographic Documents, were most helpful in our visits to Moscow. As ever, the staff at Glasgow University were of great assistance; especially important were Tanya Konn and Ada Boddy, the Russian specialists in the University Library, and Stephen Whitelaw and Ben Malorhu from the computing service. Olga Kryshtanovskaia and her colleagues at the Institute of Sociology in Moscow, notably Igor Kukolev and Pavel Saldin, were indispensable for that part of the research which is based on interviews. The data-entry part of the Soviet Elite Project was overseen by the ingenious Stephen Revell, and implemented by Fiona Harrison, Peter Lentini, William McRreadie, Stephen Main, and Ian Thatcher. Sarah Oates kindly assisted with our graphics. Any shortcomings or mistakes are, of course, our own.

*Evan Mawdsley  
Stephen White*

Glasgow, May 1999

<sup>36</sup> Davies *et al.*, *Soviet Government Officials*.

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# Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xxi
<i>List of Tables</i>	xxii
<i>List of Figures</i>	xxiv
1. Revolutionaries in Power, 1917–1923	I
A Revolutionary Elite	2
Old Bolsheviks	21
The Central Committee in Power	28
2. Old Bolsheviks, Socialist Construction, and the Purges, 1923–1939	34
The Elite from Lenin to Stalin	35
Early Stalinists	56
The Central Committee Devours Itself	64
3. Stalin's New Elite, 1939–1956	91
A New Elite: The Class of '38	92
Stalinists	117
The Central Committee in Eclipse	126
4. Stalinist Generation, 'Leninist Norms', 1956–1966	136
The Elite under Khrushchev	138
The Old and the New	145
The Silver Age of the Central Committee	153
5. The Elite Consolidates, 1966–1985	167
A Stabilizing Elite	169
Brezhnev's People	176
The Central Committee under 'Developed Socialism'	186

6. Challenge and Crisis, 1985–1991	195
A Changing Elite	197
The Gorbachev Elite	210
The Central Committee and Perestroika	219
The Last Days of the Central Committee	227
7. Elite and Society	241
A Representative Elite?	242
A Privileged Elite?	256
8. An Evolving Elite	275
The Elite in History	276
An Enduring Elite?	288
<i>Bibliography</i>	303
<i>Index</i>	317

## List of Illustrations

1.1. Nikolai Krestinskii, pictured in 1927 (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	22
1.2. Andrei Andreev, pictured in 1920 (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	26
2.1. Iosif Vareikis (from <i>Izvestiia TsK KPSS</i> , no. 12, 1989)	61
2.2. Panas Liubchenko (from <i>Izvestiia TsK KPSS</i> , no. 10, 1990)	64
3.1. Nikolai Patolichev, pictured in 1970 (Novosti)	120
3.2. Nikolai Baibakov, pictured in 1970 (Novosti)	125
4.1. Nikolai Zhurin (from <i>Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR</i> , 1966)	148
4.2. Vladimir Novikov (from <i>Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR</i> , 1974)	150
4.3. Nikolai Egorychev addressing the 23rd Congress of the CPSU in 1966 (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	153
5.1. Mikhail Vsevolozhskii (from <i>Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR</i> , 1966)	178
5.2. Ziia Nuriev, pictured in 1970 (Novosti)	181
5.3. Petr Gorchakov, pictured in 1974 on his election as a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	185
6.1. Viktor Dobrik, pictured in 1970 on his election as a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	211
6.2. Erlen Pervyshin, a candidate and then full member of the Central Committee between 1976 and 1990 (Novosti)	215
6.3. Viktor Mishin, pictured in 1983 addressing the fifth festival of youth of the USSR and Bulgaria (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)	218

[RGAKFD is the Russian State Film and Photographic Archive]

## List of Tables

1.1. Turnover of CC members, 1917–1922	3
1.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1922	7
1.3. CC members, 1917–1922	12
1.4. Year of party entry of the revolutionary elite	14
1.5. Birthplace of the revolutionary elite	16
1.6. Education of the revolutionary elite	18
1.7. CC activity, October 1917–June 1923 (meetings)	30
1.8. Other positions of CC full members, July 1920	31
2.1. Turnover of CC members, 1922–1939	36
2.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1923–1934	43
2.3. Central state job-slots on CC, 1934	45
2.4. Republican state job-slots on CC, 1934	47
2.5. Regional party job-slots on CC, 1934	48
2.6. Continuity of CC members, 1917–1934	57
2.7. CC activity, 1923–1939	67
2.8. Dynamics of the CC purge, 1935–1939	69
2.9. Political survivors of the 1934 CC	75
3.1. Turnover of CC members, 1934–1956	93
3.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1934–1956	99
3.3. Institutional expansion, 1934–1952	104
3.4. Generational breakdown of CC members, 1939–1952	106
3.5. Year of party entry of CC members, 1934–1956	106
3.6. Education of party congress delegates, 1934–1956	115
3.7. CC plenums, 1938–1956	128
4.1. Turnover of CC members, 1952–1966	138
4.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1952–1966	140
4.3. Generational breakdown of CC members, 1952–1966	143
4.4. CC activity, 1952–1966	156

5.1. Turnover of CC members, 1961–1986	171
5.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1961–1986	171
5.3. Generational breakdown of CC members, 1961–1986	174
5.4. Nationality of CC members, 1961–1986	175
5.5. Levels of Central Committee Activity, 1966–1985	190
6.1. Turnover of CC members, 1981–1990	198
6.2. Job-slot representation of CC members, 1981–1990	205
6.3. Nationality of CC members, 1981–1990	207
6.4. Generational breakdown of CC members, 1981–1990	208
6.5. CC activity, 1980–1990	226
7.1. CC, party, and society in 1925	245
7.2. CC, party, and society in 1939	248
7.3. CC, party, and society in 1961	251
7.4. CC, party, and society in 1976	252
7.5. CC, party, and society in 1990	254
8.1. Generational breakdown of CC members, 1917–1990	279
8.2. Turnover of CC members, 1918–1990	279



# List of Figures

8.1. CC days of meeting, 1917–1990	285
8.2. CC resolutions, 1917–1990	286

# I Revolutionaries in Power, 1917–1923

Democratic centralism means only that representatives from the localities assemble and elect a responsible organ, which then must govern. But how? That depends on how many suitable people there are and, of those, how many are good administrators. Democratic centralism consists of the congress verifying the CC, removing it, and naming another.

V. I. Lenin, 9th Party Congress, March 1920

The first five years after the Revolution were the ‘heroic’ period of Soviet history and the time when Lenin and an elite of underground veterans led the Communist Party and the Soviet state. The seizure of power in October 1917 was followed by years of chaos in the government, the economy, and foreign relations. Only gradually was effective control built up over Soviet Russia. The Civil War reached its peak in 1919–20, however, and by the end of it the Red Army had retaken most of the Empire, driving out the Whites and crushing internal discontent. Reconstruction and consolidation began in early 1921 under the New Economic Policy. During this heroic period the Bolshevik Party was transformed from a small, semi-legal revolutionary organization into the backbone of the largest state in the world. The young men who led the party, whom Lenin called the ‘old party guard’ and Bukharin called the ‘iron cohort of the revolution’,<sup>1</sup> were themselves changed from revolutionary conspirators into national leaders. Important milestones along the way were the six party congresses held from July–August 1917 to March–April 1922. Each congress renewed and supplemented the party elite by electing a new Central Committee. A total of seventy-eight individuals served as full members or candidate members during this period, and these form the group which we will call the ‘revolutionary elite’.

The period between the 11th (March–April 1922) and the 12th (April 1923) Party Congresses makes a clear break in the history of the Soviet elite, and of the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1964), xlv. 20; N. I. Bukharin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988), 34–6.

Central Committee that embodied it. The Central Committee elected at the 11th Congress was the last relatively small one. Partly in keeping with Lenin's request, the number of full members was in 1923 increased by nearly half, from twenty-seven to forty. Meanwhile Stalin emerged as General Secretary of the party's Central Committee in April 1922, and new party rules (*ustavy*) and the formation of the 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' in December 1922 changed the institutional setting. Above all, a series of strokes effectively removed Lenin from the leadership in the winter of 1922–3. Factional disputes within the elite, especially the rivalry in the Politburo between Trotsky and the 'troika' of Kamenev, Stalin, and Zinoviev, quickly became more open and serious. By the time the 12th Congress of the newly styled 'All-Union Communist Party' met in April 1923, a new era would be beginning.

## A Revolutionary Elite

From its 'official' beginnings in 1898 through to its collapse in 1991 the Communist Party and its predecessors had an executive in the form of the Central Committee (*Tsentrāl'nyi komitet*, or *TsK*). It was to be one of the very few institutions which kept the same name throughout the party's history. The Central Committee was normally selected at a party congress, and there were to be twenty-eight such congresses. The Central Committee had a chequered history in the two decades before October 1917. It was a small body greatly affected by the factional battles fought at the top echelons of Russian Marxism.<sup>2</sup> The CC was beset also by the problems of operating both inside and outside the Russian Empire as an illegal or semi-legal institution in conflict with the autocracy and its political police. The first 'Bolshevik' Central Committee was elected at the so-called 6th (Prague) Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (RSDRP) in 1912, at the moment when Lenin's faction became a self-standing party within Russian Marxism. The pre-revolutionary membership was not renewed for five years after 1912, until the 7th Conference met in revolutionary Petrograd in late April 1917.

The Central Committee elite in 1917–23 was in some respects different from what would come later, even in the 1920s. Table 1.1 shows the basic situation. The committee was re-elected frequently, at annual party congresses; later on there would be intervals between congresses of five years or more. The committee was much smaller than it would become even by the late 1920s. In the early years of power it was kept small so that it could function effectively, but it was slowly enlarged as subcommittees (the Politburo and the Orgburo) took on more of a

<sup>2</sup> The classic English-language history, including much on the pre-revolutionary Central Committee, is Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, 2nd edn. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970).

**Table 1.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1917–1922

Congress	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
	July–Aug. 1917	Mar. 1918	Mar. 1919	Mar.–Apr. 1920	Mar. 1921	Mar.–Apr. 1922
Full members	21	15	19	19	25	27
Candidate members	8	8	8	12	15	19
Total	29	23	27	31	40	46
In previous CC	9	17	13	20	21	32
Not in previous CC	20	6	14	11	19	14
In next CC	17	13	20	21	32	34
Not in next CC	12	10	7	10	8	12
Turnover (%)	31	41	43	26	32	20
Politburo	—	—	8	8	8	10

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected; for 1917 turnover the ‘previous meeting’ is the 7th Conference, held in April 1917. The Politburo row gives, for comparative purposes, the total number of the Politburo full and candidate members immediately after the given congress.

day-to-day role.<sup>3</sup> The Politburo was as much as a third the size of the Central Committee in 1919, but by 1922 it was less than a quarter the size, and in the 1930s would soon settle down to about 10 per cent of the size. Even during the 1917–23 period the size of the Central Committee increased by about a third. On the other hand, it was smaller than it would become in the near future: it totalled 106 and 121 members in 1925 and 1927 respectively, and would level off in 1930, 1934, 1939, and 1941 at seventy-one members and sixty-seven to sixty-eight candidates. The status of candidate member was partly a throwback to the underground party, when difficulty of movement and frequency of arrest made substitutes essential. The system was maintained even after the party took power, but the first substitution came only in the middle of 1921.<sup>4</sup> There was no clear pattern of ‘promotion’

<sup>3</sup> The large 21-member CC elected in August 1917 was found to be ‘completely unviable’ as an administrative body, or at least that was the verdict of Ia. M. Sverdlov, the party’s chief administrator, at the March 1918 congress. He recalled that there were never more than 17–19 people present, normally 15–16, and in October 1917 attendance had been down to 9–12; see *Sed’ moi ekstrennyi s’ezd RKP(b), mart 1918 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gos. Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962), 164. In the 1919 rules the CC was set at 19 full members and 12 candidate members, but in 1922 the size was left to be determined by the annual congress. The number was never again precisely stipulated in the rules.

<sup>4</sup> The places of members who departed were to be filled by candidate members in the order determined by the congress. The first post-revolutionary promotion from candidate to full member (between congresses) came in August 1921 when V. Ia. Chubar’ replaced F. A. Sergeev (Artem), who had died in an air crash. The 1922 rules also clarified the role of candidate members: they participated in plenary meetings of the CC with a consultative (*soveshchatel’nyi*) vote.

from candidate to full member. This would be a feature of some later Central Committees, but in 1917–22 individuals as often first joined the CC as full members as they joined it as candidates.

The turnover rates of the Central Committee—and of elite job-holders—in the period 1917–23 was high by later standards, never less than 20 per cent; it was especially high given the short interval between congresses. The turnover at the 1918 and 1919 congresses was extraordinary, at 41 per cent and 43 per cent, but even in 1921 the rate was 32 per cent, reflecting the consequences of the heated debate going on within the party about the role of the trade unions. After 1921 there was rather more stability. The lowest turnover in this period was in 1922, when it fell to eight members out of forty (20 per cent), and it would drop to 11 per cent—only six members out of fifty-seven not carried over—in 1924.

In any organization the membership of elected committees rarely just ‘emerges’, and the element of behind-the-scenes organization increases in direct proportion to the number of electors. The Russian Communist Party was no exception. Even in the elections to the Central Committee at the early party congresses a substantial number of voters were involved; these ranged from a low of forty-seven voting delegates at the 1918 Congress to a high of 717 in 1921. Normally the voting was done towards the end of the party congress, in a closed meeting. The technical election process at the congresses changed over time, but from an early period it was one over which Lenin and his immediate comrades had a great deal of control. This was above all due to the use of a dominant centrally drafted list or slate of candidates (*proekt sostava* or *spisok*).<sup>5</sup> It is now known that at the 1919 Party Congress the composition of the Central Committee was essentially fixed well before the ‘election’. Two central organizers, Stalin and N. N. Krestinskii, discussed a list with the Urals, Volga, Petrograd, and Moscow delegations, and this was approved at a meeting of the outgoing Central Committee three days before the congress delegates voted.<sup>6</sup> A number of other lists were put forward, but the people actually elected were nearly all those who had been approved by the old Central Committee.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Robert Daniels suggested that it was only from 1921 that a ‘slate’ limited the amount of real choice in elections. See his ‘Evolution of Leadership Selection in the Central Committee, 1917–1927’, in Walter M. Pintner and Don K. Rowney (eds.), *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 355–68. The element of choice seems to have been very limited well before 1921.

<sup>6</sup> Consultation with the delegations was not, however, unimportant. By the early 1920s, according to Boris Bazhanov, Stalin’s private secretary, the list was worked out with some input from the *sen’oren-konvent*, an ad hoc group made up of the leaders of the outgoing Central Committee plus the heads of the main delegations (such as those from Moscow, Petrograd, and the Ukraine). See B. Bazhanov, *Vospominaniia byvshego sekretaria Stalina* (n.p.: Tret’ia volna, 1980), 128. The first party congress with which Bazhanov was personally associated was the 11th, in 1922, but the system had evidently been in operation for some time before that.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Deiatel’nost’ Tsentral’nogo komiteta partii v dokumentakh (sobytiia i fakty)’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 8, p. 174; *Vos’mois’ezd RKP(b), mart 1919 goda: Protokoly* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel’svo politicheskoi literatury, 1959), 341, 362 f.

At the 1921 Congress Lenin and his leading group (known as 'The Ten') hand-picked the Central Committee, allowing a few places to their opponents. They proposed, in the name of 'former members of the Central Committee who had signed the Platform of the 10 . . . and . . . a private meeting of delegates to the congress who stand on the same platform' a list of twenty-three full and thirteen candidate members, with two blank slots for each category. After the votes had been cast and the new committee announced, it was clear that none of the names proposed by the 'Platform of the 10' group had been rejected, and only two of the proposed full members had received less than 75 per cent of the votes cast.<sup>8</sup> The voting was not yet monolithic. No fewer than sixty-eight additional full members and seventy-six additional candidate members were proposed, and less than a third of the names on Lenin's list received over 95 per cent of the possible votes. The point is, however, that in practice it was very difficult to build up a challenge to the leadership. Some of the less popular 'approved' candidates might receive embarrassingly few votes, but they still won more support than 'write-in' candidates, who could not receive enough to win membership.

The top leadership, then, could generally determine the membership of the Central Committee. This made for convergence between the membership of the committee and key office-holders—that is, the national elite. One of the central concepts of this book is what Robert Daniels has pithily described as the 'job-slot' system, by which various state and party jobs had *ex officio* membership—slots—on the Central Committee.<sup>9</sup> Comrade 'X' was elected to the Central Committee, not directly as a popular individual or a member of a particular faction, but because he or she held a particular job whose status merited membership on the CC—although of course that appointment itself reflected favour with the leadership. Daniels himself dated the maturity of the job-slot system from the late 1920s,<sup>10</sup> but it was arguably a significant factor even in the early period. Over the first four years there was frequent—essentially annual—renewal of the Central Committee. The 'institutions' of state and party were in a very fluid state. Individuals moved quickly one from one post to another, and commonly held more than one post at a time. In addition, such were the military and economic demands that leaders were assigned to ad hoc posts. The changing territorial situation also had

<sup>8</sup> Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia i izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii (RTsKhIDNI), Moscow, fond 45, opis' 1, delo 29, p. 14; *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP(b), mart 1921 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), 714f. The two additional full members, the leaders of the 'Workers' Opposition', I. I. Kutuzov and A. G. Shliapnikov, had been orally endorsed by Lenin at the election meeting: see *10-i s'ezd*, 887, n. 108. For recollections of the back-room strategy by an insider see A. I. Mikoian, *Mysli i vospominaniia o Lenine* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1970), 135–41.

<sup>9</sup> Robert V. Daniels, 'Office Holding and Elite Status: The Central Committee of the CPSU', in Paul Cocks et al. (eds.), *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 77–95.

<sup>10</sup> Daniels, 'Evolution', 355–68.

an impact as vast regions, the Baltic, the Ukraine, Siberia, Central Asia, passed out of—and back into—Soviet control.

Nevertheless, by the time of the 11th Party Congress in 1922 the members of the Central Committee can be fitted reasonably clearly into stable categories (see Table 1.2), and a general division of labour had probably also existed in the earlier committees. Officials in charge of the central party machinery made up only a small proportion. In 1922 they included Stalin, the new general secretary of the CC, and his two subordinate secretaries, V. V. Kuibyshev and V. M. Molotov (all elected to these posts at the congress). The only other current member of the central party *apparatus* was the head of the Agitprop Department. A high proportion of full members were, after 1919, also active in the Politburo or the Orgburo, but throughout this period few were involved primarily in day-to-day party administration. In 1922 the central state structure was still the focus of power. The basic continuities in the revolutionary elite, those posts represented in the Central Committee at the 11th Congress, and on nearly every previous CC since the seizure of power, included the chairmen of Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*, the council of government ministers) and of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (*TsIK*). Representation of 'people's commissars' (government ministers) was not the automatic thing it would become in later decades. In April 1922 there were sixteen ministry-level institutions, of which only five had their leader on the Central Committee.<sup>11</sup> The leaders of the Soviet trade unions were in effect state officials—a not uncontentious point—and there were four on the committee: the leaders of the central Trade Union Council (*VTSPTS*) and two leaders of individual unions. There were no full-time 'police' officials on the committee in 1922. The 'military' category included Trotsky, as commissar for war, and three other revolutionaries. The professional military leadership was not represented, as it consisted of barely tolerated former officers of the Tsarist army. The 'diplomatic' category is a misnomer in this early era. Insofar as officials concerned with 'foreign relations' were on the Central Committee they were from the Communist International. The commissar for foreign affairs, a former Menshevik (G. V. Chicherin), would not become a member until 1925.

Away from the 'centre', local territorial representation among the Central Committee elite was relatively modest in 1922. The small size of the 'republic party' and 'republic state' sub-group reflected the incomplete constitutional structure of the country. The 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' would not be formed until December 1922, and even then there would be only three republics outside the Russian republic (RSFSR). The Ukraine was the only area where large and logical Central Committee representation of republic-level

<sup>11</sup> This was only four individuals, as F. E. Dzerzhinskii held two 'ministerial' posts. Ministry-level institutions in this period are defined as people's commissariats and the Supreme Economic Council (*VSNKh*).

**Table 1.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1922

	Number	%
Central party	4	9
Central state	14	30
Republic party	5	11
Republic state	4	9
Regional party	6	13
Regional state	6	13
Military	4	9
Diplomatic	2	4
Media	1	2
TOTAL	46	100

*Note:* Category is based on primary position. ‘Central State’ excludes people’s commissar (minister) for the armed forces, but includes trade-union officials. ‘Regions’ include level of *guberniia* (province) and party *oblast’*, as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. ‘Diplomatic’ includes Comintern.

party and state officials existed at the time of the 11th Congress. The chairmen of the Ukrainian Council of People’s Commissars and Central Executive Committee were members, as well as the first and second party secretaries in the Ukraine. The party first secretary of the newly formed Transcaucasian Federation was a member, along with two other party officials from that region. Belorussia, the fourth republic, had no representation at all. The next tier, the regional one, was also thinly represented. The institution of the ‘regional bureau’ of the party Central Committee (*oblastnoe biuro TsK*) existed in several non-national areas; these were much bigger than the ‘oblasts’ which would appear in the 1930s. The head of the Urals party bureau was a member, as was his opposite number in the South-East (i.e. the Don–North Caucasus area). Another member had general party responsibility for Siberia. These are all included in Table 1.2 in the ‘regional’ category. This was a pattern that had developed over time during the Civil War, with Siberia and the Urals—along with the Ukraine, the Transcaucasus, and Central Asia—each being represented on the Central Committee by two or three leaders.

In 1922, and in the years before and after, the ‘regional’ leadership of the capital cities of Petrograd and Moscow and their immediate hinterland were over-represented, which also said much about the ‘insular’ nature of Soviet power at that time. The key figures were the chairmen (L. B. Kamenev and G. E. Zinoviev) of state rather than party bodies, the Moscow and Petrograd Soviets. This was a parallel with the central system (i.e. Lenin and the Council of People’s Commis-



sars), in that it was the holders of state rather than party posts who were most important. Three other 'state' officials came from Petrograd. Moscow was more of a harbinger of things to come, with two local party secretaries supplementing the soviet chairman. Beyond the capitals there was nothing as clear as the system of 'regional' (*guberniia* and later *oblast'*) party secretaries which would develop later. In 1922 there were about forty-five regional-level administrative entities in the European part of the Russian republic (the RSFSR) and a further eight in the Ukraine, but the only one—other than the capitals—represented at Central Committee level was Ivanovo. Graeme Gill has suggested that a 'structural division' was developing in the Central Committee elite between central and regional office-holders, with the latter gaining a majority in 1922. Gill's argument is that the supposed split limited the development of institutional identity of the Central Committee and encouraged the later growth of Stalinism. There were indeed a number of factors which reduced the 'institutional identity' of the Central Committee at this time, not the least of which was the infrequency of its meetings (see below). The central-regional division, however, was probably not such an important element, at least for this period. In any event, for the more stable situation of 1922 our count (Table 1.2) gives a substantial majority of members, 61 per cent, still holding Moscow-based posts.<sup>12</sup> There is no doubt that regional representation did increase and may have been a factor reducing the coherence of the CC, but it did not happen as early as 1922.

What was this revolutionary elite like? There have been a number of attempts to characterize the Bolshevik 'old party guard', often in contrast to a 'Stalinist' elite that would follow them. Much of Trotsky's analysis of the 'betrayal' of the revolution was based on the conflict between this old party guard, the 'proletarian vanguard', and a new generation of bureaucrats.<sup>13</sup> In an early attempt at a collective

<sup>12</sup> Graeme Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 61f., 344f. Gill made a breakdown of full and candidate members by 'bureaucratic constituency'. Individuals were assigned to one of four categories: (1) central party apparatus, (2) local party apparatus, (3) state, and (4) 'other'. This made the situation seem more precise than it actually was for the small committee of the early period. In reality individuals simultaneously held posts in different categories or moved rapidly from one category to another. In any event, Gill's 1922 figures do not correspond exactly with those in Table 1.2, probably because of the way his 'other' category was defined. He based the 'dramatically reversed' pattern on a count in 1922 of 37% (17 people) for the centre and 46% (21 people) for the regions—leaving out 17% (8 people) in the 'other' category. According to our count (Table 1.2) some 25 individuals were employed primarily in a central institutions, and another three were Moscow 'regional' leaders—giving a total of 28 'Muscovites', or 61% (28/46).

<sup>13</sup> See Trotsky's 'New Course' of 1923, especially 'Vopros o partiinykh pokoleniiakh', *Pravda*, 29 Dec. 1923, p. 4. Also of interest is his critique, originally published in 1936, L. Trotsky, *Predannaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow: NII Kul'tury, 1991), 81–97. Trotsky, who had not been a Bolshevik until the middle of 1917, was in some difficulty in making this argument, and in neither work did he attempt a detailed discussion of 1902–16 Bolsheviks or of the role of the working class versus the intelligentsia in the party.

biography George Schueller described the predominant type in the Politburo in 1917–24 (and to a lesser extent in 1924–38) as ‘the theoretician of middle-class origin—comparatively well-educated, well-traveled, cosmopolitan’, and contrasted this to ‘the class of organisers and administrators’ who came later.<sup>14</sup> Schueller was talking about the Politburo rather than the Central Committee as a whole, but that dichotomy is one that is frequently suggested. Richard Pipes has put forward the mirror image of this argument, projecting a view of the revolution which blames everything on the extreme aspirations of ‘the intellectuals who seized power in October 1917’; and more broadly, Edward Keenan has noted the destabilizing role of a revolutionary elite foreign to the bedrock of Russian peasant society.<sup>15</sup> The Russian historians Korzhikhina and Figatner attempted a post-Communist analysis of the whole ‘nomenklatura’ system. Here they contrasted different generations of the supreme rulers of Russia, using as a basis different cohorts of the Central Committee membership. The ‘Leninist Guard’ were compared favourably with what would come later; they were ‘professional revolutionaries, offspring of families of skilled, hereditary workers and of *raznochintsy* intelligentsia’. They entered ‘a persecuted party out of deep conviction about the necessity of social transformation, and in addition to upbringing and education they mastered new professions in prisons, exile and hard labour’; ‘[t]hey were distinguished by their independence of mind, their hatred of bureaucracy, and a fanatical romanticism for industrialization’.<sup>16</sup>

One of the common features of the Soviet elite both in 1917–23 and in 1923–37 was that the great majority had been in the Bolshevik Party—either as leaders or rank-and-file members—before 1917. It follows that the nature of the *pre-revolutionary* Bolshevik Party is also important. David Lane, looking at the formative period of the party (1898–1907), searched for the social roots of the split between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions. He found little difference between the *elites* of either faction. All of them were mainly from the ‘upper strata’, with few manual workers or members of the middle class. Lane found that among the rank and file the Bolsheviks attracted more migrants from the countryside than did the Menshevik faction. They also had more appeal among the youth. The main difference

<sup>14</sup> George Schueller, *The Politburo* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1951), 3. A contemporaneous theoretical study at Stanford made much of the ‘specialists on persuasion’, the revolutionary intellectuals: H. D. Lasswell *et al.*, *The Comparative Study of Elites*, Hoover Institute Studies, Series B, Elites, No. 1 (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1952).

<sup>15</sup> Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution, 1899–1919* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1990), pp. xxii, 364–6; *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919–1924* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 495, 497. Pipes has it in for one particular intellectual, V. I. Lenin, but it would not be straining his argument too much to say that the Bolshevik ‘fanatics’ were for Pipes the embodiment of the intellectuals (*Bolshevik Regime*, 500). Edward L. Keenan, ‘Muscovite Political Folkways’, *Russian Review*, 45: 2 (1986), 169.

<sup>16</sup> T. P. Korzhikhina and Iu. Iu. Figatner, ‘Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovlenie, mekhanizmy deistviia’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1993, no. 7, pp. 25–38. This was based on an analysis of the 1924 CC, but it is making a broader comment. It also explicitly contrasts the ‘Leninist Guard’ with the Stalinist generation; see Chaps. 2 and 3 below.

at the rank-and-file level, however, was that the Bolsheviks were far more homogenous than the Mensheviks, 'overwhelmingly Great Russians'.<sup>17</sup> This view was accepted and carried forward through 1907–12 by Carter Elwood in his study of the underground Bolshevik Party. For Elwood, the pre-1905 Social Democratic Party 'was essentially a creation of the intelligentsia', but the departure of the intelligentsia after 1905–6 for the first time gave the party a proletarian character. Much was made by Elwood of the youth of new members, 'urchins playing at revolution', as one veteran apparently put it. Elwood saw among 'middle-echelon personnel' after 1907 a situation in which the majority had joined the party since 1905; 'a new generation which, in comparison to the pre-1907 leadership, came from a different class, was younger, and had less [party] experience'. Although these changes were evident throughout the RSDRP, they were, in Elwood's view, particularly noticeable among the Bolshevik faction.<sup>18</sup>

A similar view was taken in an influential article by Leopold Haimson: 'Where [in 1914] was the Bolshevik intelligentsia which supposedly still "stood on the shoulders of the proletariat?" It simply was no longer there.' '[T]he urban youths who had grown to working age since the Revolution of 1905 . . . now constituted the intermediary link between the leading circles of the Bolshevik Party and the labouring masses.'<sup>19</sup> Jerry Hough, meanwhile, has developed the distinction between the émigrés and 'committeemen' (*komitetchiki*), and stressed the importance as a formative influence on the future Soviet system of the latter group, 'who were more Leninist than Lenin himself'.<sup>20</sup> Robert Daniels made the same point in his history of the Communist 'opposition':<sup>21</sup>

The oppositionists were typically Westernized émigrés, both Bolshevik and Menshevik, who had assimilated basic Western assumptions of socialism as a democratically constituted system based on prior industrial development. The Stalinists were Russia-oriented undergrounders, who took for granted the real political and economic implications of the Russian Revolution.

An important, and related, question is whether there was a change in the nature of the revolutionary elite under the impact of the Revolution and Civil

<sup>17</sup> David Lane, *The Roots of Russian Communism: A Social and Historical Study of Russian Social-Democracy 1898–1907* (London: Martin Robertson, 1975), 50f. Lane's study was based on a letter sample of published data about 986 Social-Democrats. Richard Pipes followed Lane's interpretation in his *Russian Revolution* (p. 365).

<sup>18</sup> Ralph Carter Elwood, *Russian Social Democracy in the Underground: A Study of the RSDRP in the Ukraine, 1907–1914* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 60–4, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Leopold Haimson, 'The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905–1917', Part 1, *Slavic Review*, 23: 4 (Dec. 1964), 633, 638f.

<sup>20</sup> Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 37. This sociological analysis was self-consciously in opposition to Merle Fainsod's *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), which stressed the importance of Lenin's personality and doctrine.

<sup>21</sup> Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 408.

War. Did the realities of holding power lead to the replacement in the elite of one group of Old Bolsheviks by another? That there was such a shift was one of the conclusions of the fullest study of the Central Committee membership in these years, by Werner Mosse. Mosse subdivided his 'makers of the Soviet Union' into three groups: a 'central leadership core' who sat on nearly all Central Committees, an 'Old Bolshevik' group who were elected in 1917–20, but not later; and a 'New Bolshevik' group who were active mainly in the later CCs (1920–2). Mosse's argument was that the 'New Bolshevik' group was already beginning to supersede the 'Old Bolshevik' group even during Lenin's lifetime. The former group had, according to Mosse, the characteristics of a 'predominantly middle-class background, a high level of educational attainment and a relatively high proportion of men of non-Russian extraction', the latter a "lower-class" background, elementary education and Russian origin'.<sup>22</sup> An even more careful analysis of a broader elite, that is, of congress delegates and regional party committee members, was made by T. H. Rigby, who saw strains between 'Old Bolsheviks' and 'new men' in the early post-revolutionary elite. The former predominated in the early stages of the revolution and the latter in 1919–21.<sup>23</sup>

What, then, can be said about the characteristics of the early leadership as a whole, and to what extent can it be broken down into distinct groups? It is difficult exactly to replicate Mosse's findings, but it is useful to follow his analysis of the 'makers of the Soviet Union' and especially his contrast between the 'Old' and 'New' Bolsheviks.<sup>24</sup> Mosse's basic approach can be reconstructed and enhanced by making sub-groups of the revolutionary elite. The breakdown of the seventy-eight individuals is given in Table 1.3. There were nineteen party leaders who had Central Committee full or candidate membership up to (and including) the 9th Party Congress in 1920, but who were not elected to the CC at all in 1921 or 1922 (i.e. at the 10th and 11th Party Congresses). These will be called the 'old revolutionary elite' (to make them distinct from Mosse's ambiguous 'Old Bolsheviks'). Things are not altogether clear-cut, as four of these nineteen, even though excluded from the 1921 and 1922 Central Committees, would be re-elected to a

<sup>22</sup> W. E. Mosse, 'Makers of the Soviet Union', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 47 (1968), 144, 151. Mosse's studies was based on 35 full members of the Central Committee. There were eight in the 'central leadership', 10 'Old Bolsheviks', and 17 'New Bolsheviks'. The terminology is confusing as the normal meaning of 'Old Bolsheviks' is those who joined the party before October 1917. Nearly all the 'New Bolsheviks' were 'Old Bolsheviks' in this sense. The term 'New Bolsheviks' was also used in T. H. Rigby, 'The Soviet Political Elite Under Lenin', in *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990).

<sup>23</sup> Rigby, 'Under Lenin', 39.

<sup>24</sup> Mosse, 'Makers', does not indicate by name who was in each group. Mosse was not explicit about who were the 18 individuals he excluded altogether as 'ephemeral', i.e. who served too briefly to be considered at all in his analysis. (As 53 individuals were full members of the CC in this period, and 35 were actually in Mosse's three groups, it follows that 18 individuals comprised his 'ephemerals'.)

**Table 1.3.** CC members, 1917–1922

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1. Core revolutionary elite. Elected to the CC both before and after the 9th (1920) Congress.			
Bubnov, A. S.*	Kiselev, A. S.*	Rykov, A. I.*	Sokol'nikov, G. Ia.*
Bukharin, N. I.*	Lenin, V. I.+	Sergeev, F. A.+	Stalin, I. V.
Dzerzhinskii, F. E.+	Miliutin, V. P.*	Shliapnikov, A. G.*	Tomskii, M. P.
Iaroslavskii, E. M.	Petrovskii, G. I.	Shmidt, V. V.*	Trotsky, L. D.*
Kalinin, M. I.	Radek, K. B.*	Smilga, I. T.*	Zinoviev, G. E.*
Kamenev, L. B.*	Rakovskii, Kh. G.*	Smirnov, I. N.*	
2. Old revolutionary elite. Not elected to the CC <i>after</i> the 9th (1920) Congress.			
Beloborodov, A. G.*	Ioffe, A. A.+	Lomov, G. I.*	Skrypnik, N. A.*
Berzin, Ia. A.*	Kapsukas, V. S.+	Muranov, M. K.	Stasova, E. D.
Danishhevskii, K. Kh.*	Kollontai, A. M.	Nogin, V. P.+	Stuchka, P. I.+
Evdokimov, G. E.*	Krestinskii, N. N.*	Preobrazhenskii, E. A.*	Vladimirkii, M. F.
Iakovleva, V. N.*	Lashevich, M. M.*	Serebriakov, L. P.*	
3. New revolutionary elite. Not elected to the CC <i>before</i> the 9th (1920) Congress.			
Andreev, A. A.	Krivov, T. S.	Mikoian, A. I.	Safarov, G. I.*
Badaev, A. E.	Kuibyshev, V. V.+	Molotov, V. M.	Sapronov, T. V.*
Chubar', V. Ia.*	Kutuzov, I. I.*	Ordzhonikidze, G. K.	Sulimov, D. E.*
Frunze, M. V.+	Lebed', D. Z.*	Osinskii, V. V.*	Tuntul, I. Ia.*
Gusev, S. I.+	Lepse, I. I.+	Piatkov, G. L.*	Uglanov, N. A.*
Kirov, S. M.+	Lobov, S. S.*	Piatnitskii, I. A.*	Voroshilov, K. E.
Komarov, N. P.*	Manuil'skii, D. Z.	Rakhimbaev, A. R.*	Zalutskii, P. A.*
Korotkov, I. I.	Mikhailov, V. M.*	Rudzutak, Ia. E.*	Zelenskii, I. A.*

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*Note:* The following, who died before 1920, are not included: P. A. Dzharidze, S. G. Shaumian, Ia. M. Sverdlov, and M. S. Uritskii. Those marked with a cross died before 1936. Those marked with an asterisk were executed, assassinated, or died in prison after 1935.

CC *after* 1922; these four at least were not 'men of the past'.<sup>25</sup> A second sub-group of thirty-two were first voted on to the Central Committee as full or candidate members only at the 1920 congress or at the following two congresses. These will be called the 'new revolutionary elite'. But a third of these (9/32) were hardly men of the future, as they would not survive more than two further congresses.<sup>26</sup> Mosse did identify a point, 1920, where there was a significant break, a kind of turnover. But a major argument against Mosse's neat 'Old Bolshevik'/'New Bolshevik' dichotomy is the large residual group, whom we will call the 'core revolutionary elite', who served in both periods. These people made up nearly a third of the total (23/78). (Another four individuals died before 1920, and are not taken into

<sup>25</sup> G. E. Evdokimov, M. M. Lashevich, G. I. Lomov, and N. A. Skrypnik would be elected to the CC after 1922.

<sup>26</sup> S. I. Gusev, I. I. Korotkov, T. S. Krivov, I. I. Kutuzov, A. R. Rakhimbaev, G. I. Safarov, T. V. Sapronov, I. Ia. Tuntul, and P. A. Zalutskii had been dropped from the CC at or before the 14th Congress (1925). I. A. Piatnitskii was only elected to the CC once in the 1917–23 period, in 1920, so he could fall into either group. Because he would serve in CCs after 1922 he is included in the 'New Elite' group.

account.) However, making for the moment the assumption that the old elite and the new elite did represent different groups (and ignoring the ‘continuing elite’ and four individuals who died), how does this help clarify the overall characteristics of those who were on the Central Committee in 1917–23?

The first area to look at, both for the 1917–23 revolutionary elite as a whole and for the early and late sub-groups, is political experience. One obvious point is that they were almost all experienced radical veterans, for the most part ‘Old Bolsheviks’ in the accepted sense of those who joined the party before October 1917. On the face of it, the year of joining the party (*partiinyi stazh*, *partstazh*) is one of the easiest pieces of information to obtain about Central Committee members, even in the most obscure periods of Soviet history. Taking all Central Committees between 1917 and 1990, there is a published year of party entry for every member but one.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately there are complications, especially in the early period, and Soviet reference sources occasionally give different dates of party entry for the same individual. Soviet data make 1904 the median year of entering the party for all seventy-eight members of the revolutionary elite, but it was only in 1903 that the Bolshevik faction came into existence, and the final split with the Mensheviks in the umbrella Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (RSDRP) came as late as 1912; even then it is unclear how far individuals saw themselves as ‘Bolsheviks’. Trotsky is a good example of the difficulty, as he only became a Bolshevik in 1917 but had been active in the Marxist revolutionary movement since 1897. He joined the Bolsheviks from the so-called Inter-District Group (*Mezbraionka*) in the summer of 1917, along with three other future Central Committee members, Ioffe, Manuil’skii, and Uritskii. Likewise, Kollontai had been active generally in the RSDRP before joining the Leninist faction in 1915. Others—Dzerzhinskii, Kapsukas, Radek, and Stuchka—had been members of other Marxist groups in Poland and the Baltic provinces.

As Table 1.4 shows, there were differences between our old and new revolutionary elites in terms of party experience. The median year of entering the party was lower for the old elite, 1903 versus 1906, with the watershed of the 1905 Revolution in between. The difference is significant. It is interesting that Molotov, who joined the RSDRP in 1906 (at age 16), did not consider himself an Old Bolshevik—for him this term really belonged to the revolutionaries of 1905.<sup>28</sup> The main explanation for the difference in year of party entry between the two groups is age: the old revolutionary elite were, on average, born four years earlier. However, what needs to be stressed is that even the new elite, the people who first entered

<sup>27</sup> A convenient source for the ‘official’ date of party entry period for the period before 1976 are the lists in *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1961–76): ‘Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Sovetskogo Soiuza’, vii. 703–11, and ‘Tsentral’nyi Komitet [KPSS]’, xv. 742–3. The only missing date is for V. N. Pavlov, Stalin’s interpreter, elected a candidate CC member in 1952.

<sup>28</sup> F. I. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym; Iz dnevnika F. Chueva* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), 179.

**Table 1.4.** Year of party entry of the revolutionary elite

	All ( <i>SIE</i> )	All (any party)	Old elite	New elite	1922 delegates
To 1904	41	48	15	10	68
1905–7	11	12	2	11	68
1908–16	17	16	1	9	116
1917	8	1	1	1	136
1918–19	1	1	0	1	112
1920–1	0	0	0	0	22
TOTAL	78	78	19	32	522

*Note:* The ‘Revolutionary elite’ are individuals elected to the Central Committee between 1917 and 1922 (inclusive). The columns headed ‘All’, ‘Old elite’ (not elected after 1920), and ‘New elite’ (not elected before 1920) are based on Soviet published data on entry ‘into CPSU’, mainly in the *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*. ‘All (any party)’ covers entry into *any* radical party. The final column gives the official party entry date for all voting delegates to the 11th (1922) Party Congress (*XI s’ezd*, 714).

the Central Committee in 1920 or later, had by then been party veterans for an average of thirteen years.

The revolutionized workers and soldiers of 1917 were not swept into the leadership. The ‘revisionist’ historians of 1917 and the Civil War are right to stress the importance of the mass movement and the adaptability of the party,<sup>29</sup> but the elite remained a closed one. It was dominated by men (n.b.) who had been in the underground radical Marxist party leadership before February 1917. Some 62 per cent (48/78) of the whole 1917–23 group had actually been active in radical politics before the 1905 Revolution. It may be the case that only one member entered radical politics after the February 1917 Revolution, the Uzbek leader A. Rakhimbaev, who became a Communist in 1919 at the age of 23. The other possible new entry was the Moscow textile union leader I. I. Kutuzov, but he may well have been a member of another party before, and possibly during, 1917.<sup>30</sup>

In its longer discussion of the elite over the seventy-four years of Soviet power the present work uses a rough generational scheme to bring in the age and life experience of the elite. First, second, third, and fourth generations can be distinguished, those born in 1900 and before, and those born in 1901–20, 1921–40, and after 1941. The revolutionary elite of 1917–23 were all of the first generation.

<sup>29</sup> For example Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 310–14.

<sup>30</sup> Kutuzov officially joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, and was a full Central Committee member in 1921–2. According to his biography in the Granat encyclopedia of the late 1920s, his [r]evolutionary activity in the illegal period began in 1906; see *Deiateli SSSR i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia Rossiia: Entsiklopedicheskii slovar’ Granat* (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1989), 474. The reasons for suggesting he was not actually a Bolshevik in 1917 is his absence from *Geroi Oktiabria: Kniga ob uchastnikakh Velikoi Oktiabr’skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii v Moskve* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1967).

They were young; the median year of birth for the revolutionary elite as a whole was 1884, so the average Central Committee member had been 21 in 1905, and 33 in 1917. Comparing the two sub-groups, the median year of birth for our old revolutionary elite was 1883 and that for the new revolutionary elite was 1887. This was not an unimportant difference, as the former (average age 21 in 1905) had tended to reach adulthood before the 1905 Revolution, and the latter (average age 18 in 1905) had not. On the other hand, both groups were of an age to be caught up in the revolution, the latter through participation in the numerous secondary-school groups, and all could have had their education disrupted.<sup>31</sup> The average member of the old revolutionary elite was 37 in 1920, while the average member of the new elite was 33, hardly a generational difference.

The birthplaces of seventy-seven out of seventy-eight members of the future revolutionary elite are known. These people came from a range of localities across the Russian Empire (see Table 1.5). Very few—eight—were actually born in St Petersburg or Moscow, and then mostly not in worker families. Interestingly, the eight included all three women, V. N. Iakovleva, A. M. Kollontai, and E. D. Stasova. More than half (40/77) were born outside the Russian part of 'European Russia'.<sup>32</sup> The revolutionary elite as a whole was ethnically very mixed, and this is consistent with the range of birthplaces.<sup>33</sup> Only half (38/78) were Great Russian. The second-largest ethnic group were the Jews, who numbered thirteen (17 per cent). Eight more were Ukrainians, eight and five were from the minorities of the Baltic and the Transcaucasus, respectively. Six further individuals belonged to as many different nationalities. Although this perhaps gives ammunition to those who see the Bolsheviks as an alien presence in 'Russia', it also contradicts the idea of the monolithic party. Rank-and-file membership of the Communist Party was more Russian than the elite; in 1922 Russians made up 72 per cent, Jews 5 per cent, and Ukrainians 6 per cent.<sup>34</sup> There was little or no difference between the old and new revolutionary elites in this respect. About half were Great Russians in either case (9/19 and 18/32). Jews formed about a tenth of each group; there were two Jews in the old revolutionary elite (Ioffe and Lashevich, with the latter making a brief Central Committee comeback after 1922), and three in the new (Gusev, Piatnitskii, and Zelenskii). One of the most remarkable features, however, was the

<sup>31</sup> Mosse did observe that there was little age difference between his two sub-groups (p. 144).

<sup>32</sup> Mosse argued that his 'New Bolsheviks' came from the 'borderlands' (i.e. were born there), while his 'Old Bolsheviks' did not ('Makers', 144–5). This seems to be incorrect; the trend is not evident for our sub-groups, the old and new revolutionary elites, and our groups are larger than Mosse's. The fact is that a slightly larger proportion of our new revolutionary elite were born in 'Russia'—47% (15/32) versus 42% (8/19) for the old—and neither sub-group was very different from revolutionary elite as a whole.

<sup>33</sup> Nationality is not always clear cut. The father of Aleksandra Kollontai (née Domontovich) was a Russian general of Ukrainian descent, and her mother was a Finn; her married name was that of her Polish first husband.

<sup>34</sup> T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 366.



**Table 1.5.** Birthplace of the revolutionary elite

	All	Old elite	New elite
European Russia	37	8	15
Borderlands			
Baltic	9	4	4
Belorussia	3	1	1
Ukraine	14	4	5
Transcaucasus	5	0	2
Urals	2	1	1
Siberia	2	0	1
Central Asia	3	1	2
Abroad	2	0	0
Unknown	1	0	1
TOTAL	78	19	32

*Note:* The 'revolutionary elite' are individuals elected to the Central Committee between 1917 and 1922 (inclusive). 'Old elite' were those not elected after 1920, 'New elite' were those not elected before 1920. 'European Russia' is that part of the 1991 RSFSR lying west of the Urals.

high proportion of Jews in the core elite—altogether 35 per cent (8/23).<sup>35</sup> The diversity of ethnic origins—and places of birth—of the revolutionary elite argues against extending to the post-revolutionary leadership David Lane's findings about pre-1907 Bolsheviks, whom he found were 'overwhelmingly Great Russians'—in distinction to Mensheviks.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Mosse singled out the Jews as a declining element ('Makers', 145), but this is evidently incorrect. Richard Pipes has argued that it was irrelevant that there were a disproportionate number of Jews among the top leaders, because those individuals resented being seen as Jews (*Bolshevik Regime*, 102–4).

<sup>36</sup> Lane, *Roots*, 32. In Lane's group of top leaders the 'striking difference' between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks was that, of the latter, 'nearly all were Great Russian' (p. 32). Lane also came to the conclusion that '[t]he main and most significant difference between the factions lay in their national background. The Bolsheviks were far more homogeneous . . . they had a small minority of Jewish members but were overwhelmingly Great Russians' (p. 51). This conclusion was evidently based on an analysis of 105 delegates to the 5th (1907) Congress of the RSDRP, who were assumed to be representative of middle-rank leaders (pp. 44–6). There the proportion of 'Russians' was 78%. The proportion of Jews at the 1907 congress (11%) was lower than the proportion in our revolutionary elite (16%), but the biggest difference was that there were in 1907 fewer Ukrainians (1% versus 10%), Balts (3% versus 9%), and Transcaucasians (5% versus 7%).

In contrast to this earlier situation outlined by Lane, both Mosse and Rigby found remarkable the number of non-Russians in the early post-revolutionary Communist elite (Mosse, 'Makers', 151; Rigby, 'Under Lenin', 24, 38). Mosse stressed the number of non-Russians among his 'Leading Group' and 'New Bolsheviks' (p. 145), while Rigby noticed a trend in the opposite direction, with a reversal of the Russification trend in 1921–2 (based on the 522 voting delegates to the 11th Congress); see: 'Under Lenin', 25; *Odinnadtsatyi s'ezd RKP(b), mart–aprel' 1922 goda: Stenograficheskie otchet* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1961), 716.

Social origins, education, and occupation are all linked together, and the simple division might be between workers and 'intelligentsia' for Western authors, and between workers, peasants, and 'employees' (*sluzhashchie*) in Soviet accounts (and party documents). As we have seen, some of the most important accounts of the Bolshevik Party before 1917—by Lane, Elwood, and Haimson—stressed the departure of the intellectuals and dominance of workers. Given this, it is surprising that Mosse found his 'Leading Group' and 'Old Bolsheviks' to be dominated by 'middle-class' men with a higher or secondary education, and Rigby noted that '[a]t the top the "intelligentsia" domination of the leadership was very striking even in numerical terms [i.e. as well as in ideological influence] and remained so after the Revolution'.<sup>37</sup>

Our own research suggests that great care must be taken in dealing with social status. It is difficult to say much about the pre-revolutionary 'occupations' of the party elite, partly because the sources are less forthcoming on this point than any other, and partly because many people were involved in full-time party work. Individuals moved from job to job, employment was broken by spells in prison, exile, or emigration. On top of everything else, careers were disrupted by the earthquake of the First World War, and not only for the younger men who were called up for military service. Social origin and education are also complicated but more easy to deal with. The former is defined here as father's occupation, and here again the pattern for overall leadership was divided. Altogether 42 per cent (8/19) of our old revolutionary elite were born into the 'lower classes', that is, worker or peasant families, which is roughly the same as for our core elite (10/23); the proportion for the new elite was substantially higher at 66 per cent (21/32). But in any event, the largest element in the revolutionary elite as a whole can reasonably be called 'plebeian'. Some 52 per cent (40/77) came from a worker or peasant background, with sixteen (21 per cent) from the workers and twenty-four (31 per cent) from the peasants, and the proportion of peasants was higher among the new revolutionary elite than the old.<sup>38</sup>

The education of the revolutionary elite was as mixed as its social origins. As Table 1.6 shows, 40 per cent (31/78) reached some kind of higher educational institution, 33 per cent (26/78) at least began some kind of secondary education, and the rest, 27 per cent (21/78), had only a primary education or none at all.<sup>39</sup> From this point of view it would be inaccurate to talk of the revolutionary elite as dominated either by intellectuals or by the uneducated. In fact, our old

<sup>37</sup> Mosse, 'Makers', 145; Rigby, 'Under Lenin', 27.

<sup>38</sup> Mosse suggested that only a fifth of his 'Old Bolsheviks' were of peasant extraction ('Makers', 145). In our old revolutionary elite the proportion was rather higher: a third were of peasant origin (6/19, or 32%), and the proportion among the new elite somewhat higher (44%, 14/32).

<sup>39</sup> Higher education is defined here as entering (not necessarily completing) a university, polytechnic, or comparable institution; secondary is defined as anyone not in the first group who entered some form of secondary school. Completed education and revolutionary activity, given Tsarist repression, were often mutually exclusive.

**Table 1.6.** Education of the revolutionary elite

	All	Old elite	New elite
Higher	31	9	8
Secondary	26	7	10
Primary or none	21	3	14
TOTAL	78	19	32

*Note:* The ‘revolutionary elite’ are individuals elected to the Central Committee between 1917 and 1922 (inclusive). ‘Old elite’ were those not elected after 1920, ‘New elite’ were those not elected before 1920. Level is highest level of education begun.

revolutionary elite were much better educated than the new—47 per cent (9/19) higher and 37 per cent secondary versus 25 per cent (8/32) higher and 31 per cent secondary—and this was a key distinction between the two sub-groups. This difference in education was there, despite the fact that once the turmoil of the 1905 Revolution was over the secondary and higher education of student-revolutionaries was less likely to be disrupted by expulsion or other disciplinary measures.<sup>40</sup>

Another experience that is often left out of discussions of the elite is the impact of Tsarist authority. The RSDRP was dedicated to the overthrow of the autocracy, and the autocracy for its part gave little room for conventional political activity. The 1905 Revolution saw open conflict between the two sides, and the RSDRP Duma deputies’ refusal to vote for war credits in 1914 led to a further government crackdown.<sup>41</sup> The information available is not altogether consistent, and biographical comments like ‘*podvergalsia repressiiam*’ (‘subject to repression’) can refer to quite different experiences. The majority of the 1917–23 group were affected in one way or another by this situation, spending time in internal exile (*sylka*), or leaving the country. Some were subject to prison or hard labour (*katorga*). Extreme experiences, like those of Dzerzhinskii (who was not actually a Bolshevik), were in fact unusual—exiled for the first time in 1897 with frequent periods of internal exile and imprisonment, escape, emigration, but in prison or on hard labour from 1912 to 1917. On the other hand a survey of biographies indicates that the majority were affected by ‘repression’ in some form. In this respect the old revolutionary elite were probably more affected than the new, but it was a common experience for both. A number had—generally to avoid the Tsarist

<sup>40</sup> The situation seems different from that observed by Mosse. For him only 20% of the ‘Old Bolsheviks’ received a higher education, and 50% a secondary education, while for the ‘New Bolsheviks’ it was ‘just over a third’ who had a higher education, while secondary was ‘barely a quarter’ (‘Makers’, 145).

<sup>41</sup> For published documents on the Okhrana’s perspective see the recently reprinted *Bol’sheviki: Dokumenty po istorii bol’shevizma s 1903 po 1916 god byvshego Moskovskogo Okbrannogo Otdeleniia* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 3-e izd., 1990).

authorities—spent time abroad, but there is no clear differentiation between the old and new revolutionary groups in this respect, and so it would be inaccurate to call one group ‘cosmopolitan’ and the other not.<sup>42</sup>

The impact of the Civil War of 1917–21 was an important factor, indeed it is a major reason why some historians, including Mosse, see a change in the elite in 1920. Almost immediately upon taking power the Bolshevik Party was thrown into a life-or-death military-political conflict of great savagery. The Civil War could be seen as a Darwinian struggle which helped ‘select’ a particular group from among the Old Bolsheviks. For Sheila Fitzpatrick the radical measures adopted during the Civil War predisposed the veterans’ support for ‘revolution from above’. Less convincing, at the elite level at least, is her dichotomy between ‘military’ and ‘civilian’ Bolsheviks, that is, between those who fought with the Civil-War Red Army and those who did not.<sup>43</sup> Moshe Lewin drew attention to the disappearance of alternative elites, and the process of ‘selection’ figures strongly in his 1968 book *Lenin’s Last Struggle*: ‘[t]he consequences of the [Civil] war also fell upon the personnel of the Party leadership. Before long it was clear that leaders of a particular type were emerging as dominant among the men who rose in the hierarchy.’ Lewin saw two groups, the first ‘intellectuals and idealists’, the second ‘primarily executives, men of action, practitioners of the revolution’. The new men ‘belonged to the “race” of realistic and practical men of action’. Curiously, this argument was not developed by Lewin two decades later in an overview of the period, but there was another evolutionary metaphor, with the party (as a whole) becoming after 1917 ‘a different genus of the same species, if not an entirely different species’.<sup>44</sup> The argument has been developed most fully by Mark von Hagen, who saw a ‘militarised socialism’ emerging from the ‘common experience of military service’.<sup>45</sup> From the point of view of our revolutionary elite—at Central Committee level—things are not so clear-cut. As we have seen, the revolutionary elite does not show a clear shift of personnel during the 1917–23 period,

<sup>42</sup> Pipes argues that even those Marxist leaders who spent many years in Western Europe, like Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev, were ignorant ‘of foreign political cultures’: ‘even as they lived in their midst, they had little contact with Westerners, for they led isolated existences in émigré communities and communicated only with the more radical elements of European socialism’ (*Bolshevik Regime*, 236 f.). This is certainly a reasonable point. On the other hand Pipes *also* says that Lenin ‘spent nearly one-half of his adult life abroad . . . and never had a chance to learn much about his homeland’ (*Russian Revolution*, 352), so the impression is that Lenin understood *neither* the West *nor* Russia.

<sup>43</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, ‘The Legacy of the Civil War’, in Diane Koenker *et al.* (eds.), *Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War: Explorations in Social History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 385–98, 399–423.

<sup>44</sup> Moshe Lewin, *Lenin’s Last Struggle* (New York: Pantheon, 1968), 32, 59; ‘The Civil War: Dynamics and Legacy’, in Koenker, *Party, State, and Society*, 399–423. See also Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (London: Methuen, 1985), 21–6, 202, 308.

<sup>45</sup> *Soldiers of the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State, 1917–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 6. See also his ‘The Rise and Fall of the Proletarian Sparta: Army, Society, and Reformism in Soviet History’, in David Holloway (ed.), *Reexamining the Soviet Experience: Essays in Honour of Alexander Dallin* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1996), 53–56.

nor do the biographies of our new revolutionary elite data show any special tendency for activity in the Red Army, grain-requisitioning detachments, and so on. It may have been the case, however, that the leadership level *below* the Central Committee elite was in fact thrown up by the Civil War. And a *psychological* impact across all levels is quite possible; the struggle hardened the attitudes and conduct of the entire party, veterans and new recruits, elite and rank and file.

In the long term, one of the most extraordinary features of the revolutionary elite of 1917–23 was that so many would be victims of the political system they had helped to create. Of the sixty-two members of this revolutionary elite still alive in 1936, no fewer than forty-four (71 per cent) were victims of political murder, mostly at the hands of NKVD executioners in 1937–8.<sup>46</sup> Table 1.3 subdivides the elite and shows its fate. The new revolutionary elite was nearly as badly hit as our core and old elites. Some 67 per cent (18/27) of the surviving new elite were executed, compared to 73 per cent (11/15) for the old revolutionary elite and 75 per cent for the core elite (15/20). Some 15 members of the revolutionary elite featured in the ‘show trials’ of 1935–8, but actually more of the defendants came from the new elite (four) than the old (three).<sup>47</sup> The men of action may have prospered after 1920, but they were not going to inherit the earth. Why that should be the case is discussed more fully in Chapters 2 and 3.

Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacques Marie, in their analysis of the revolutionary notables profiled in the *Granat* encyclopedia, criticized the ‘confused and simplistic notion of the “Bolshevik Old Guard”’. There was, they argued, no single type,<sup>48</sup> and this judgement is both correct and important. It is true, as Mosse and others have argued, that ‘old’ and ‘new’ elements can be seen in the revolutionary elite, and 1920 has rightly been identified as one watershed. On the other hand, the large core revolutionary group, the twenty-three people who were in the Central Committee both before and after 1920, meant that there is nothing like a clear break. Even then, the ‘old’ and ‘new’ groups were not clearly differentiated from one another by place of origin or nationality, and neither class nor education made

<sup>46</sup> Of the 78 members of the revolutionary elite 16 had died before 1936. Those counted as murdered includes two who supposedly died in prison (K. B. Radek and G. Ia. Sokol’nikov), and also Trotsky. On the other hand, A. A. Ioffe, S. M. Kirov, V. V. Kuibyshev, G. K. Ordzhonikidze, and M. P. Tomskii are not counted as ‘victims of Stalinism’, although for some of them there is a strong case for doing so. Tomskii would certainly have been executed had he not committed suicide. The same is probably true of Ordzhonikidze. Ioffe killed himself a decade before, but as an ally of Trotsky’s he would certainly have perished in the Purges. Many historians would still link Kirov’s death with Stalin, and some would do the same with Kuibyshev.

<sup>47</sup> This includes G. I. Safarov and P. A. Zalutskii, who featured in the January 1935 trial of the ‘Leningrad Counter-Revolutionary Zinovievite Group’, as well as 13 who were in the three major trials in 1936–8.

<sup>48</sup> G. Haupt and J.-J. Marie (eds.), *Makers of the Russian Revolution* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), 22. They were looking at those profiled in the *Granat* encyclopedia, but this group had a good deal in common with our revolutionary elite of CC members.

them altogether distinct. There were workers and *intelligenty*, Russians and non-Russians, in both groups. The revolutionary elite was, in any event, far from uniform, and to see a Central Committee of plebeians replacing one of intellectuals would be an oversimplification.

There were also characteristics that bound the revolutionary elite together, and differentiated it from the rest of the party and society. Most important was the experience of underground activity. Both old and new elites, as well as our core, were quite different from what might reasonably be taken as the next tier of the hierarchy, the party congress delegates. Some 94 per cent even of the new revolutionary elite were 'Old Bolsheviks', compared, for example, to only 48 per cent of 522 voting delegates to the 1922 Party Congress (see Table 1.4). Lenin must have had this in mind when he wrote to Molotov on the eve of the 1922 congress that, 'at the moment the proletarian policy of the party is determined not by its membership but by the immense, indivisible authority of that thinnest of layers, which can be called the old party guard'.<sup>49</sup> This old party guard, the revolutionary elite of 1917–23, also had much in common with those first elected to the committee between 1923 and 1934 (who will be discussed in Chapter 2, as the 'new entrants' to the 'early Stalinist elite'), although the later group had a lower proportion of Old Bolsheviks. Together, the revolutionary elite and the new entrants were dominated by Communists of broadly similar age and experience, the 'first generation', people born before 1901 and brought up under the Old Regime, revolutionaries who played a part in the events of 1917–20. Where there was a break it would come with the Purges.

## Old Bolsheviks

There was no typical member of the revolutionary elite in the Central Committee, but Nikolai Nikolaevich Krestinskii and Andrei Andreevich Andreev represent, to a certain extent, recognizable 'types'. Krestinskii was a member of the intelligentsia; Andreev, in contrast, was a plebeian Bolshevik. Both men were Politburo members at some point in their careers—Krestinskii in 1919–21 and Andreev from 1926, but in 1917–23 neither was in the very front ranks of the revolutionary leadership.

Krestinskii was commissar for Finance in 1918–22, ambassador to Weimar Germany in 1921–30, and deputy commissar for Foreign Affairs in 1930–7.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, xlv. 20.

<sup>50</sup> The most recent accounts are V. V. Sokolov, 'N. N. Krestinskii—revoliutsioner, diplomat (1883–1939)', in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 5 (1989), 120–42, and Nikolai Popov, "Byl i ostaius' Bol'shevikom", in *Vozvrashchennye imena, kniga 1*, pp. 299–314. Although highly tendentious, Krestinskii's testimony at his trial in 1938 is also interesting: Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen (eds.), *The Great Purge Trial* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1965). See also shorter biographies: *Granat*, 462 f.; 'Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS partii—Politbiuro (Prezidiuma), Orgbiuro, Sekretariata TsK (1919–1990 gg.)', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, p. 104.



1.1 Nikolai Krestinskii,  
pictured in 1927 (RGAKFD,  
Krasnogorsk)

From 1919 to March 1921 he also served on the Politburo and the Orgburo and as secretary of the Central Committee. Krestinskii was elected to the CC in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920, but not in March 1921, April 1922, or at any later congress. He was to be shot in March 1938, at the age of 55. Although his daughter Natalia later described him as an ‘*intelligent* of the “old school”’, Krestinskii did not fall easily into the stereotype of the argumentative émigré. Given that so much of his post-revolutionary career involved work in foreign affairs, it is noteworthy that he had not been abroad before 1917 and did not know any foreign languages. He was not a delegate to any of the party meetings held abroad before the war, nor was he a theoretician; he left no major published works.

The future Bolshevik was born in 1883 in the provincial town of Mogilev. Both parents were Ukrainian, but Mogilev was in what became Belorussia. Presumably they were members of the Russified intelligentsia found in all corners of the Empire. Although Krestinskii was counted in party records as a Ukrainian he had no connection with the Ukraine in his later career. His father had dabbled as a youth with nihilism but settled down to become a teacher and administrator in the

local academic secondary school (*gimnaziia*). Krestinskii himself completed the Vil'na (Vil'nius) *gimnaziia* in 1901. His introduction to radical ideas had come at age 16 and 17 while in the final years of the school, especially under the influence of one of his teachers, a Marxist. Unlike most of his contemporary intelligentsia-Bolsheviks, he was able to complete his higher education, gaining a degree from the Law Faculty of St Petersburg University in 1907. Krestinskii had become politically active from the end of 1901 and was a member of the new Vil'na organization of the RSDRP from 1903—at age 20—from which year his party membership dated. He later claimed to have regarded himself as a Bolshevik only in the course of the 1905 Revolution. He was a member of several town party committees in western Russia during these years, before moving permanently to St Petersburg. He gained employment as a barrister (*prisiazhnyi poverennyi*), but unlike many other members of the intelligentsia did not leave the 'movement' after the failure of the Revolution. Between 1907 and 1914 he also worked for the Bolsheviks in trade unions and the press, and for the Social-Democratic fraction in the State Duma. He even ran unsuccessfully for the Duma in the 1912 elections. The radical young lawyer was relatively untouched by the Tsarist authorities. As a youth who reached the age of 22 during the October 1905 crisis, he was understandably caught up in the great struggle with the autocracy. Several relatively minor arrests and imprisonments dated from the autumn of 1904. The first serious incident, however, came only with the outbreak of war in 1914. At the age of 31 he was exiled from St Peterburg, not to the Siberian wilderness, but first to one large town in the Urals and then to another.

After the autocracy was overthrown Krestinskii attended a conference of soviets in Petrograd in March 1917 and was a delegate to the Provisional Government's Democratic Convention, held in the capital in the autumn. In the main, however, he stayed where he had been exiled. He was chairman of the Urals regional committee of the Bolshevik Party, and deputy chairman of the Ekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk) town party committee. He was elected *in absentia* to the Bolshevik Central Committee at the 6th Congress in August 1917, one of relatively few members from the localities. The party's confidence in him was evidently well placed. He played an active part in winning over the local soviets in the Urals and was chairman of the Ekaterinburg military-revolutionary committee during the October Revolution. A critical move was from regional party and soviet work to the centre. Perhaps Krestinskii had distinguished himself in Lenin's eyes by his energetic work in the Urals. In any event he was a Bolshevik delegate (from Perm' province) to the abortive Constituent Assembly, and this finally brought him back to the capital in December 1917. There, as an educated, energetic, and trusted party comrade, he was given an important post, commissar of the Narodnyi Bank and member of the collegium of the Commissariat of Finance. Although he opposed the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace with



Germany, he was re-elected to the Central Committee at the 7th Congress. When the government moved to Moscow in March 1918 Krestinskii remained in Petrograd, as deputy chairman of the bank. With his legal background he was also 'commissar of justice' of the ephemeral Union of Communes of the Northern Region.

Presumably his bank experience led to his appointment in August 1918—at age 34—to head the central government's Commissariat of Finance (*Narkomfin*). He formally occupied this post until October 1922, although a year before that he had been made ambassador to Germany. Alongside his post of commissar of finance Krestinskii was a Central Committee secretary from November 1919 to March 1921. Krestinskii did not hold any major 'field' posts in the Civil War period, that is, he was not involved in food requisitioning or as a military commissar. His failure to continue in the Central Committee after March 1921 was evidently the result of his having lost Lenin's confidence, despite—or because of—very close personal contact with him in the later part of 1920. Krestinskii had differed with the Soviet leader in the fierce debate over the trade unions in 1920–1, when he sided with Trotsky against Lenin; he had also disagreed with the leader two years before, over the Brest-Litovsk treaty.<sup>51</sup>

Krestinskii held two important foreign-affairs posts in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a delegate to all post-1921 party congresses except the 15th (1927), and from February 1924 was a member of the All-Union Central Executive Committee of the soviets (*TsIK*). He was, however, never again to be elected to the Central Committee. He was, evidently as late as 1927, a supporter of the 'Opposition' of Trotsky, Zinoviev and others against the Stalin–Bukharin majority in the Politburo and Central Committee, but he publicly broke with it in 1928. He was arrested in May 1937 and expelled from the party. In March 1938 he appeared as a key defendant in the show trial of the 'Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist Bloc'. Bukharin, Rykov, and fifteen other defendants pleaded guilty to absurd charges of treason, terrorism, espionage, and conspiracy. Krestinskii alone pleaded not guilty; at the opening of the trial, and in one of its most dramatic moments, the former barrister rejected his written confession and denied any guilt. The following day he reversed himself and provided the required testimony, but it did him no good. He was found guilty and shot, along with most of the other defendants, two days after the trial ended.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Popov ("Byl i ostaius' Bol'shevikom", 307f.) notes that in vol. 9 of Lenin's *Biograficheskaya khronika*, covering late 1920 and early 1921, Krestinskii's name appears more frequently than that of anyone else except Commissar of Foreign Affairs Chicherin. Krestinskii's wife, a doctor, had been involved with Lenin's medical care. For what it is worth, Krestinskii testified in 1938 that he had resented his surprise posting to Germany, for which he had no background, and regarded it as a political exile (Tucker and Cohen, *Great Purge Trial*, 220, 620f.).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 36, 49–60, 154–8, 220–45, 619–25. See also 'O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu tak nazывaemogo "antisovetskogo pravotrotskistskogo bloka"', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 5, pp. 69–85.

Andrei Andreev was another example of a Bolshevik leader, but of a different stamp.<sup>53</sup> He was a dozen years younger than Krestinskii and from a much humbler background. Andreev would become a senior Stalinist, sitting on the Politburo from 1926 to 1952, and serving as a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers from 1945 to 1953. Like Krestinskii, Andreev was born in western Russia, but in a village in Smolensk province and to a poor Russian peasant family; the year was 1895. His mother worked for thirteen years as a farm labourer, and her father had been a serf. Andrei was a clever child, but had only two years in a village school, between the ages of 8 and 9. An uncle found work in Moscow as a *dvornik*, a building caretaker, and in 1905 Andrei's father followed him with his young family. Such were the conditions in the damp, dark basement flat that the parents and two younger siblings moved back to the countryside. Andrei stayed on, and at 13 began menial work in a hotel. At 15 he tramped from town to town in the Caucasus and South Russia seeking work. The First World War evidently brought greater security; when he was 19 he found employment in St Petersburg (now renamed Petrograd), briefly as a worker in a munitions factory, then as a clerk in a social insurance office at the Putilov Factory.

Andreev seems to have been exposed to Marxism as a teenager in the 'Enlightenment' workers club in one of Moscow's industrial suburbs, and his official party membership dated from 1914 (aged 18 or 19).<sup>54</sup> He was sufficiently involved to be given introductions to party comrades in the northern capital. Clearly Andreev was too junior to have taken part in any of the pre-war party meetings outside Russia. In the winter of 1915-16 he was co-opted on to the Bolsheviks' underground 'Petersburg Committee' from the Narva borough, his first important step up. The Narva borough was the site of the Putilov and other major factories. No doubt his rise was furthered by the arrest of so many older comrades. At about the same time he met his future wife, Dora Khazan. A year older than Andreev, she came from a lower-middle-class Jewish background in Riga. Her party membership dated back to 1912; in 1916 she worked in the social insurance office of the Putilov factory and supervised an underground press; in 1916 she would be exiled to Siberia; Khazan was to have a strong impact on Andreev until her death in 1961. In any event, after the February 1916 strike at the Putilov Factory Andreev had to

<sup>53</sup> Andreev's memoirs went to press four months before his death: A. A. Andreev, *O nezabyvaemom: Ocherki revoliutsionera-bol'shevika* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1972). The most useful source is the second edition, prepared by his daughter Nataliia Andreevna; the text is essentially the same, but the volume also contains letters and recollections of comrades and family members: A. A. Andreev, *Vospominaniia, pis'ma* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985). See also: A. A. Andreev, *O Vladimire Il'iche Lenine* (Moscow: Politizdat, 2-e izd., 1965); *Granat*, 349; *Geroi Oktiabria*, i. 75-7; 'Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov TsK', 83.

<sup>54</sup> Andreev's year of party entry was given as 1912 in the delegate list for the 17th Congress; see: *XVII s"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 683. He turned 17 in October 1912, and it was apparently at age 16 that he began to read Marxist literature (*Vospominaniia*, 284). However, most sources (including the 15th Congress delegate list) give his year of entry as 1914.



1.2 Andrei Andreev, pictured in 1920 (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)

become an ‘illegal’, and apparently his only pre-revolutionary trip outside Russia proper was when he went into hiding in Finland. He was back in the capital by the end of the year, working in the insurance office of another factory, and he was on the streets during the February 1917 Revolution.

Once the Tsar had been overthrown Andreev, still only 22, worked to organize the new Petrograd Union of Metalworkers. The young activist appears not to have played a very prominent part in the October armed uprising,<sup>55</sup> but was thrown into the turmoil and personal danger of the Civil War. He was sent to the Urals in the winter of 1917–18, then moved to the Ukraine. Dora Khazan went everywhere with him; their first child, Vladimir, was born in Kharkov in 1919. Andreev went back to the Urals in late 1919 and on to Siberia, as an organizer of industry and labour. He was already a member of the presidium of the Trade Union Council (*VTsSPS*). He was first elected a party congress delegate at the time of the 9th Congress (March–April 1920). More remarkably, Andreev was at this congress, aged only 24, elected on to the Central Committee as a full member. Evidently this was because he had already been chosen to come back to Moscow

<sup>55</sup> This interpretation is based on the reticence of both *Granat* and *Geroi Oktiabria*.

to take on the important post of secretary of the Trade Union Council. In any event, immediately after the election of the Central Committee Mikhail Kalinin introduced him to Lenin, and Lenin told him of his new post. Andreev would stay at the Trade Union Council until 1922. He was not re-elected to the Central Committee at the 10th Congress in 1921, probably because—like Krestinskii—he backed the wrong side in the trade-union debate, but he came back onto the CC at the 11th Congress in 1922. In 1922 he was also appointed—still in his twenties—to the sensitive post of chairman of the Union of Railwaymen, a post he held until 1927. This, along with his role as a CC secretary in 1924–5, kept him on the committee. A range of other responsible posts would follow.

The first part of this chapter looked at the revolutionary elite as a group. Krestinskii and Andreev were individuals. Many of the experiences of these two men were typical of both the revolutionary elite of 1917–23 and the early Stalinist elite of 1923–37, both of which came from the ‘first generation’. They show also, however, that there was no typical *individual* in this elite. Neither was in the core elite, serving across the revolutionary period. Krestinskii was elected to the Central Committee in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920, but would never serve on it again; Andreev only came onto the Central Committee in 1920 when the Communist victory in the Civil War was almost assured. Krestinskii was older, he joined the party a decade earlier, and he was ‘revolutionized’ by 1905–6 when Andreev was still only a child. Krestinskii’s parents were members of the intelligentsia, Andreev’s were peasants. St Petersburg University provided an incomparably better education than two years of a village primary school, and a barrister enjoyed higher status than an unskilled worker *cum* clerk. Krestinskii spent most of the Civil War in Petrograd or Moscow; Andreev spent his time just behind the front lines in the struggle to consolidate liberated regions. Krestinskii was only on the fringes of power after 1920 and died miserably as a self-confessed Trotskyist; Andreev was in Stalin’s Politburo for a quarter of a century and helped lead the attack on the ‘opposition’.

On the other hand, the cases of Krestinskii and Andreev suggest that the division of the revolutionary elite should not be pushed too far. They cannot altogether be seen as paradigms, Krestinskii the doomed intellectual and Andreev the plebeian man of the future.<sup>56</sup> Neither was a hereditary urban proletarian, and neither came from one of the capitals. Neither suffered serious repression at the hands of the Tsarist authorities, and neither saw service in the First World War (although Andreev’s *father* was called up). Neither had taken a major part in the

<sup>56</sup> The intellectual–plebeian divide should not simply be superimposed on top of the divide between the old and new revolutionary elites. Had, for example, the ‘old’ and ‘new’ examples been not Krestinskii and Andreev but L. P. Serebriakov (elected to the CC in 1919 and 1920) and S. I. Gusev (elected in 1921 and 1922) the situation would have been seemed different. Serebriakov was an uneducated metalworker, Gusev a teacher’s son who had completed an academic secondary school and attended the elite St Petersburg Technological Institute.

pre-war controversies within the party, attended congresses, nor sat on party committees. Both men, Krestinskii as much as Andreev, were involved in party work at home, rather than in emigration; Krestinskii was as much a *komitetchik* as Andreev. Neither played a prominent part in the October Revolution in Petrograd. They were not differentiated by degrees of unthinking loyalty; both Andreev and Krestinskii sided with Trotsky on the trade-union debate, and both were removed from the CC for this reason. Above all, what Krestinskii and Andreev had in common with one another, and with the other members of the revolutionary elite, was that they were veteran ‘underground’ Old Bolsheviks. Both were—by normal standards—young men when they were given very responsible posts after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution.

## The Central Committee in Power

The revolutionary elite is identified here with the membership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. As a collective the Central Committee elite operated in theory under the party rules, of which three sets were in operation, in succession, in the Revolution–Civil War period. They were adopted in August 1917 (6th Congress), December 1919 (8th Conference), and August 1922 (12th Conference). From an early stage in the party’s pre-revolutionary history it had been recognized that the Central Committee could not be a day-to-day working organ. This was also true—albeit for different reasons—once the Central Committee began to operate more regularly in Russia, first under the Provisional Government as a legal, Russia-based organization and then as a *de facto* part of the Soviet government. The August 1917 party rules stated that for current work the Central Committee was to choose a subcommittee consisting of its ‘narrow membership’ (*uzkii sostav*). The December 1919 rules codified what had been decided at the 8th Congress nine months before: work was to be conducted by the Political Bureau (Politburo), Organization Bureau (Orgburo), and Secretariat, and the functions of these bodies were further spelled out in 1922. The Central Committee itself was given very broad powers by the various versions of the party rules. The position in 1917 was as follows:

The Central Committee represents the party in relations with other parties and institutions, organizes the various institutions of the party and guides their activities, appoints the editorial board of the CO [central ‘organ’, i.e. the party newspaper], which works under its supervision, organizes and directs enterprises having all-party significance, distributes the forces and funds of the party, and manages the central treasury of the party.<sup>57</sup>

The 1919 rules kept essentially the same wording but added an important rider: ‘The Central Committee guides the work of the central soviet and

<sup>57</sup> The CC also set the norms of representation at party congresses, although in 1919 and 1922 this power was given to the pre-congress conference. The CC was obliged to make a report to the annual congress.

public organizations through party fractions.' These powers were repeated in 1922.<sup>58</sup>

The first period of the Central Committee's activities, immediately before and after the October Revolution, was its 'Golden Age'. The Central Committee met frequently, and real debates took place over fundamental issues. The famous meetings of 10 and 16 October 1917 made the decision to seize power. After the uprising there were heated debates about the nature of the new government, and in the frequent meetings of January and February 1918, critical votes on the question of war and peace with the Central Powers. On 4 November 1917, after a week of Bolshevik power, Kamenev, Rykov, Miliutin, Zinoviev, and Nogin resigned from the Central Committee over the issue of the composition of the post-revolutionary government. This resignation took in a quarter of the full members—although Zinoviev retracted his action on the 7th.<sup>59</sup> No one would ever do this again. But because this really has to do with the high politics of the Bolshevik Party and has been discussed by other historians, we will pass on to the Central Committee as it became more institutionalized.

After the hectic winter of 1917–18 the Central Committee did not meet very frequently. According to the 1917 rules plenary meetings (*plenarnye zasedaniia*) were to be held at least every two months. In March 1918 the Central Committee resolved to hold regular weekly meetings of the 'narrow membership', also called the 'buro', with a plenum held once every three weeks. At the first plenum after the 8th Congress (1919) the Central Committee resolved to have meetings on the first and third Sundays of the month.<sup>60</sup> In December 1919, when the 1917 party rules were replaced, the statutory rate was quadrupled, from once every two months to twice a month, but there was a return to the 1917 quota in the 1922 rules. There were officially eight plenums between the 8th (1919) and 9th (1920) Congresses (three every two months), and only twenty-nine between the 9th and 10th (two a month).<sup>61</sup> This actually overstates the level of activity, as several plenums were held together over a few days, followed by months with no meetings; see Table 1.7. It is clear that under these condition the Central Committee was not able to

<sup>58</sup> The 1917 rules are in *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 9th edn., 15 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1983–9), i. 589–91; the 1919 and 1922 rules are in ii. 201–9, 573–83.

<sup>59</sup> *Protokoly Tsentral'nogo komiteta RSDRP(b), Avgust 1917–Fevral' 1918* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1958), 135–6, 143–5. Kamenev did not return to the CC until March 1919; in March 1920 Rykov returned as a full member and Miliutin and Nogin as candidate members. For the debates in the Central Committee in the winter of 1917–18 see: Richard K. Debo, *Revolution and Survival: The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1917–18* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1979); Rabinowitch, *Bolsheviks*; Robert Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, Vol. 2, *Worlds in Collision* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991). For a useful recent survey of the CC's role during the early years of Soviet power see Gill, *Origins*, 60–5.

<sup>60</sup> 'Deiatel'nost' Tsentral'nogo komiteta partii v dokumentakh', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 3 (1989), 107; *ibid.*, no. 12, p. 133.

<sup>61</sup> 'Tsentral'nyi komitet RKP(b)', *Grazhdanskaia voina i voennaia interventsia v SSSR: Entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1983).

**Table 1.7.** CC activity, October 1917–June 1923 (meetings)

	1 Jan.–31 Mar.	1 Apr.–30 June	1 July–30 Sept.	1 Oct.–31 Dec.
1917	na	na	na	16
1918	12	10	3	7
1919	8	7	3	2
1920	2	2	3	7
1921	5	1	2	3
1922	1	2	2	2
1923	2	3	na	na

*Note:* The table gives the number of meetings. Gatherings of the CC (formally described as *zasedaniia* or *plenium*) held on the same or consecutive days are treated as one ‘meeting’.

develop into a real institution.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, a high proportion at least of full members had a chance to influence policy state and party in other bodies; see Table 1.8. These included, on the party side, the Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat and, on the state side, Sovnarkom.<sup>63</sup>

Among the Central Committee’s powers in the evolving system was that of electing the Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat and changing their membership between congresses. This was important during the factional disputes of the later 1920s, but it was a power little used in the 1919–23 period. This was partly because Lenin kept a tight grip on the situation, and partly because there were frequent congresses. The Central Committee authorized only one change in the Politburo, when Elena Stasova was co-opted onto it in July–September 1919. The next changes to the Politburo carried out by the Central Committee (rather than by a congress) would not come until the summer of 1926. Rather more changes were made to the Orgburo. Five men were put on the Orgburo by the Central Committee during the period from March 1919 to April 1920, and the August 1921 Central Committee plenum confirmed a ten-person Orgburo. Some secretarial changes were made; for example, Krestinskii and Stasova were elected as secretaries at the November 1919 plenum.<sup>64</sup>

The intention here is not to provide a detailed discussion of the Central Committee’s role in policy formation, as that would involve writing a political history of Soviet Russia. It is useful, however, to have a general sense of how the committee operated. Mikoian described the 16 May 1922 plenum (no. 2), when the CC was still small enough to meet at the long table in the Sovnarkom meeting hall;

<sup>62</sup> This is an important conclusion of Graeme Gill’s study (*Origins*, 63).

<sup>63</sup> T. H. Rigby, *Lenin’s Government: Sovnarkom, 1917–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution: A Study in Organisational Change, 1917–1923* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

<sup>64</sup> ‘Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov TsK’, 70–3.

**Table 1.8.** Other positions of CC full members, July 1920

	Politburo	Orgburo	Secretariat	Sovnarkom
Andreev, A. A.	—	—	—	—
Bukharin, N. I.	candidate	—	—	—
Dzerzhinskii, F. E.	—	candidate	—	Interior
Kalinin, M. I.	candidate	—	—	—
Kamenev, L. B.	member	—	—	—
Krestinskii, N. N.	member	member	secretary	Finance
Lenin, V. I.	member	—	—	chairman
Preobrazhenskii, E. A.	—	member	secretary	—
Radek, K. B.	—	—	—	—
Rakovskii, Kh. G.	—	—	—	—
Rudzutak, Ia. E.	—	—	—	—
Rykov, A. I.	—	member	—	Economic Council (VSNKh)
Serebriakov, L. P.	—	member	secretary	—
Sergeev, F. A.	—	—	—	—
Smirnov, I. N.	—	—	—	—
Stalin, I. V.	member	member	—	Nationalities; RKI
Tomskii, M. P.	—	candidate	—	—
Trotsky, L. D.	member	—	—	War; Transport
Zinoviev, G. E.	candidate	—	—	—

this was located on the top floor of the Kremlin's Senate building. Lenin was in the chair and, using his pocket watch, strictly controlled the length of speeches. 'Everything was strictly businesslike, and there were no side conversations . . . which might interfere with the conduct of the meeting. As I recall Lenin gave a *rapporteur* three minutes . . . [and] respondents one or two minutes.'<sup>65</sup>

For the substance of a representative 'meeting' of the Central Committee it is possible to go two years further back to the two plenums held on 16 and 17 July 1920.<sup>66</sup> With the 9th Congress in March–April 1920 the practice began of numbering plenums, and these July plenums were numbered as Plenums no. 3 and 4; no. 2 had taken place three months earlier, on 8 April. Attendance was quite full at this July 'meeting'. Of nineteen full members elected in April 1920, some seventeen were present on 16 July, and fifteen the following day. The absentees were Stalin, then an army-group commissar on the Polish front, and I. N. Smirnov, who was based in Siberia.<sup>67</sup> A wide range of questions were taken up in the July 1920

<sup>65</sup> Mikoian, *Mysli*, 219.

<sup>66</sup> The protocols were published in 'Deiatel'nost', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, pp. 119–22; no. 2, 114–16.

<sup>67</sup> Trotsky and Radek were the members who missed the second meeting. There was no indication of whether candidate members were in attendance.



plenums, some forty-one items. The recently published text of the protocols tells how each was resolved, but unfortunately gives no sense of the discussion or even of voting. Over half of the agenda items involved high-level personnel assignments, notably the creation of a delegation to the imminent 2nd Congress of the Comintern. An example of an individual assignment was Stalin's request that Sokol'nikov be sent to help him on the Polish front; this was turned down by the Central Committee on the grounds that Sokol'nikov was needed in Turkestan.

More fundamental policy decisions were also made. One concerned a reply to the British 'Curzon note' (objecting to the Red Army's westward advance into Poland); the response suggested a Soviet readiness to face war with the Western powers. Policy towards Persia and the puppet Far Eastern Republic was raised but referred to ad hoc committees. Sensitive issues came up, like approval of a Comintern subvention of £10,000 for the British Communist Party or the possible abolition of the death penalty for army deserters. The Orgburo was ordered to prepare monthly reports of Central Committee activities, which was a reflection of grass-roots party concern. The plenums declined to legalize the peasant-based Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and excluded the Jewish *Bund* from revolutionary committees. The internal exile of Menshevik leaders was considered, but two of them were given permission to go abroad. The Central Committee also acted as a political-administrative court of appeal. Many of these decisions could have been made by the Politburo or the Orgburo. In some cases the Central Committee ratified sensitive Politburo decisions, such as the ominous one which made Rudzutak chairman of the Congress of Railwaymen, and thus asserted control over it. The Central Committee also referred to a special commission a dispute about the subordination of Rykov's emergency war supply organization to Trotsky's Revolutionary Military Council. In some cases the Central Committee ruled on whether certain personnel decisions were to be resolved by the Politburo or by the Orgburo, and a clarification was requested as to the status of the two Orgburo candidate members.

Although the Central Committee was clearly taking an active role in policy-making, it met, as has been mentioned, infrequently. It was decided at the July 1920 meeting that the next plenum would be 'as soon as possible, before the departure of comrade Dzerzhinskii [to the Polish front], but in any event before the departure of comrades Rakovskii and Artem [to the Ukraine]'. As it happened, the next plenum, no. 5, would not be held for three weeks, on 5 August (and in the absence of Dzerzhinskii and Rakovskii).

What was the Central Committee elite like under Lenin? To what extent did the role and membership of the Central Committee evolve in the first six years after the revolution? The Central Committee had, after all, been transformed from the leading centre of an underground and émigré revolutionary party to the supreme

body of a state which permitted no political rivals. The official powers of the Central Committee were at their greatest up to the spring of 1919, but even then it was being replaced as a real executive by its 'narrow' leadership in the form of the Politburo and Orgburo, not to mention by important state organs. Well before the time of the new party rules of December 1919 there was a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the theoretical powers of the Central Committee—to 'organize' and 'guide' the party's institutions and 'direct' the work of the state—and, on the other hand, those powers that actually existed.

The composition of the Central Committee was less determined in advance than it would be later; the job-slot system was not fully developed. There was, however, even at this time only a very limited element of 'election'. But by whatever means its membership was determined, the Central Committee was the embodiment of the top party elite. The revolutionary elite were not a homogeneous group in terms of their social background or education, but they did share the characteristic of long-term membership in the revolutionary movement, and they did form a group distinct from those who would come two decades later. It remained to be seen how much the powers and membership of the Central Committee would be changed by Lenin's death, the consolidation of Stalin's power, and the continuing renewal of membership.

## 2 | The Old Bolsheviks, Socialist Construction, and the Purges, 1923–1937

[I]t is now completely clear that it is wrong to be for the party and against the *existing* Central Committee, to be for the Central Committee and against Stalin.

G. L. Piatakov, *Pravda*, 23 December 1929

[T]he Politburo cannot have and must not have secrets from the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Politburo Circular to CC Members, 22 February 1937

We have tens of thousands of capable, talented people. It is only necessary to find out who they are and to move them up, so that they do not get stuck in place and begin to rot.

I. V. Stalin, 3 March 1937

The second period in the history of the Central Committee elite began without a clear break from the first; only Lenin had gone. This decade-and-a-half was at least as dramatic as the period of the Revolution and Civil War. It was, in the end, the most devastating period in the Soviet elite's history.

Within the top leadership a political struggle, based on rival programmes and personalities, began following Lenin's stroke in May 1922; it intensified after his death twenty months later. Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Kamenev were removed from the Politburo at Central Committee plenums in the second half of 1926, and Bukharin and Rykov, the leading 'Rightists', followed in 1929 and 1930. Joseph Stalin remained as the senior leader and effective dictator. A policy of fawning adulation began. The start of the 1st Five Year Plan in October 1928 was followed by general collectivization of agriculture in the winter of 1929–30. 'Socialist Construction' saw fundamental changes in the Soviet economy and society. By the start of the 3rd Five Year Plan in 1938 Soviet Russia had raced through urbaniza-

tion and industrialization. The level of repression also increased sharply, following attacks on managers and engineers trained under the Old Regime, and on the better-off peasants, the kulaks. The forced-labour empire of the GULAG expanded rapidly.

All of this was a struggle, and it was fought by Stalin through the instrument of the Communist Party elite. Not for nothing was the 1934 Party Congress called the ‘Congress of the Victors’. The ‘victors’ of socialist construction were the delegates to the congress and the Central Committee they elected. The preceding chapter was about the ‘revolutionary elite’, the seventy-eight Communist leaders who served on the Central Committee between 1917 and 1923. This chapter is about what can be called the ‘early Stalinist elite’. These were the 236 people who served on the Central Committee from 1923 to 1937, that is, who were elected at the six party congresses between 1923 and 1934. The 236 included a number of individuals who were Stalin’s most bitter enemies, and two-thirds of the total would be victims of the Purges. The great majority however, including the Purge victims, were people who were called Stalinists at the time and who can be called that now. Most were appointed to the Central Committee-level posts at a time when Stalin was General Secretary of the CC (after early 1922) and had control over the party apparatus. This elite not only supported his radical policies of the later 1920s—the so-called General Line—they were the executives of that policy. They must share responsibility, too, for implementing the Stalin cult and the beginnings of mass repression.

## The Elite from Lenin to Stalin

Chapter 1 dealt with the first six years of Soviet power, when the Central Committee was re-elected at annual party congresses. The present chapter covers a period of over twice that length, and one with a changing pattern. The first three party congresses in this period (the 12th to 14th) were held on the old—annual—pattern (1923–5), while there were two years before the 15th Congress (1927), and then two and a half years before the 16th (1930), and three and half years between the 16th and the 17th (1934). The size of the Central Committee also expanded, levelling off only in 1930. There was a growth of 53 per cent between the 12th and 13th Congresses. The Central Committees elected at the 16th, 17th, and 18th Congresses were three times the size of that elected in 1922 (see Table 2.1).

The growth of the Central Committee continued across the whole Soviet period. As we have seen, by the second or third year of Soviet power the Central Committee was already too large to function as a real executive organ and had effectively been replaced as a decision-making organization by its ‘narrow’ membership (*uzkii sostav*), and then by its standing committees, the Politburo and the Orgburo. The growth of the committee may have come partly from Stalin’s use of

**Table 2.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1922–1939

Congress	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th
	Mar.–Apr.	Apr.	May	Dec.	Dec.	July	Jan.–Feb.	Mar.
	1922	1923	1924	1925	1927	1930	1934	1939
Full members	27	40	53	63	71	71	71	71
Candidate members	19	17	34	43	50	67	68	68
Total	46	57	87	106	121	138	139	139
In last CC	32	34	51	72	90	102	93	24
Not in last CC	14	23	36	34	31	36	46	115
In next CC	34	51	72	90	102	93	24	120
Not in next CC	12	6	15	16	19	45	115	19
Turnover (%)	20	26	11	17	15	16	33	83

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected. For 1939 the ‘next CC’ is the 1941 (18th) Party Conference.

patronage to build up his political base, but it also shadowed the changes in size and complexity of the Soviet polity. In any event, the expansion of the Central Committee was in line with Lenin’s wishes. The Bolshevik leader had raised the question of the Central Committee in his famous ‘Testament’.<sup>1</sup> The number of full members was increased to forty at the next congress (April 1923) and passed fifty in May 1924 (it only passed 100 in 1952).

How stable was the elite in the period 1923–37? The turnover and holdover rates of the Central Committee varied over time (see Table 2.1). Turnover was 26 per cent in 1923 at the 12th Congress; at the same time the committee was expanded by a fifth, so there was a higher proportion of ‘new blood’ in 1923 than

<sup>1</sup> The ‘Testament’ was begun in December 1922, a week after Lenin’s second stroke, and took the form of his notes for a letter to the forthcoming party congress. Lenin put as the first item on his list of proposed changes ‘the increase in the number of members [*chleny*] of the Central Committee to several tens or even up to a hundred’. (The Central Committee then consisted of 27 full members and 19 candidates.) ‘It seems to me that our Central Committee is threatened with great dangers . . . if we do not undertake such a reform.’ This measure was needed ‘for raising the political authority of the Central Committee, and for serious work in improving our party machine, and for preventing a situation whereby conflict in a small part of the Central Committee may have an inappropriate significance for the whole fate of the party’. ‘It seems to me that a Central Committee of 50–100 members is something our party has the right to demand from the working class and can get from it without stretching its strength too much.’ One reason in Lenin’s mind for this expansion was the need to strengthen the party in the face of an international crisis, but he was concerned even more with stability, and in the second instalment of his notes he raised the Stalin–Trotsky split: V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1964), xlv, 343–6—written 23 and 24 December 1922. It was ambiguous whether Lenin meant ‘members’ as *full* members (the Russian word *chleny* would cover both possibilities) or whether he was thinking of the total of full and candidate members (candidate members being translated as *kandidaty v chleny*). The former possibility seems more likely.

at any congress until 1939. Turnover settled down at the 13th Congress in 1924 with a rate of only 11 per cent. Only six individuals did not continue from 1923 to 1924 (including Lenin, who had died), and only two of the forty full members were not re-elected.<sup>2</sup> There was another big increase in total size in 1924 (from fifty-seven to eighty-seven), presumably moving towards Lenin's proposal of 'a Central Committee of 50–100 members'. The number of full members increased by nearly half; the number of candidate members doubled—and three-quarters of the candidates were completely new to the Central Committee. In 1925, at the 14th Congress, there was again little turnover among the full membership, despite the intensity of the factional struggle within the top leadership; only three of the fifty-three full members (all 'oppositionists') were not re-elected at all, while two more were demoted to candidate status. Four of these five would be expelled from the party at the 1927 congress.<sup>3</sup> Rather more of the 1924 candidates were dropped in 1925—eleven in all—and the influx of twenty-six new candidate members (replacements as well as additions) was striking; on the other hand, only six of these twenty-six new candidates would go on to full membership in 1927. Turnover was 15 per cent at the 15th Congress in December 1927. Some eleven of the sixty-three full members and five of the forty-three candidate members elected in 1925 were not re-elected. A number, but not all, of these departures came from the defeat of the so-called 'United Opposition'. The Central Committee grew from 106 full and candidate members in 1925 to 121 in 1927, but there was no flood of new full members who had not been on the committee at all in 1925. Of the seventy-one full members in 1927, fifty-two had been full members in 1925, and twelve had been candidates. There was more fresh blood among the candidate members, but slightly more than half (27/50) had been candidate members two years before.

The 16th Congress took place in June 1930, after Bukharin's defeat, and amidst the turmoil of super-industrialization and collectivization. Given what was happening in the country, it is surprising that the turnover was not greater. For the first time since 1920 there was no increase in the number of full members. Having reached seventy-one in 1927, it remained unchanged in 1930, and it would stay at that level for twenty-five years, until 1952 (i.e. in 1930, 1934, 1939, and 1941). Turnover was slightly higher than in 1927, at 16 per cent, but two and a half years had passed, and the *annual* rate was lower. Only 23 percent of 1930 full members (sixteen individuals) were new, and of these three-quarters had previously been candidate members.

The final meeting of this period took place in February 1934, the 17th Congress. The number of full members was still fixed at seventy-one, and the number

<sup>2</sup> I. I. Korotkov and K. B. Radek were the full members removed. Radek's fall was evidently explained by the fiasco of the German 'revolution' the previous autumn.

<sup>3</sup> M. M. Kharitonov, A. S. Kuklin, and P. A. Zalutskii were removed from the CC, and M. M. Lashevich and K. I. Nikolaeva were demoted to candidate status.

of candidate members increased by only one, to sixty-eight; now the overall number of candidates as well as full members would be stable until 1952. Total turnover in 1934 (full and candidate) was, at 33 per cent, remarkably high, even given the three and a half years that had passed since the previous congress. This is noteworthy because the previous, 16th, Congress, in June–July 1930 was one where Stalin presumably had had unprecedented powers of patronage. The last major opposition, the Right, had been largely defeated; Bukharin was removed from the Politburo in November 1929. In fact, nearly half (31/67) of the candidate members elected in 1930 were dropped in 1934 (by contrast, only a seventh [7/50] of the 1927 candidates had been dropped in 1930). Turnover among full members in 1934 was 20 percent (30 per cent, if those demoted to candidate status are included). One explanation of the high turnover is that a number of elite members whom Stalin had approved in 1930 were found wanting in the great tests of the 1930–4 period—industrialization, collectivization, response to the famine. Another factor is that Stalin felt no particular loyalty to elite members who were not within his *close* team. After all, turnover would be even more drastic in 1939, and this involved another Central Committee elected—in 1934—when Stalin was clearly in control.

The developing ‘election’ system—in effect, approval by congress delegates of a centrally drafted list—was described in Chapter 1. There was no change in the system after 1922, although the main list attracted more and more support and there were fewer write-in candidates. In 1923, at the 12th Party Congress, there was one printed voting list ‘proposed by the delegations from Petrograd, Moscow, the Ukraine, the Urals, the Volga, Transcaucasia, Siberia, the South East, the central provinces, the Western region, Turkestan, the Northern provinces, the agricultural provinces, [and] Kirgizia’. This comprised a list of forty named individuals as full members and seventeen as candidates; a dotted line next to each name allowed the congress delegate to cross out a printed name and write in an alternative.<sup>4</sup> In fact, all printed names were approved, and there were no successful write-ins, although there was some fluctuation of support. All 386 valid voting papers endorsed Lenin. At least twenty-seven delegates crossed out Zinoviev’s name, forty-nine Trotsky’s, and seventy-two Ordzhonikidze’s; other leaders, Bukharin, Dzerzhinskii, Kalinin, Rykov, Stalin, and Tomskii, all received 99 per cent of possible votes. Some thirty-four out of forty full members received over 90 per cent of possible votes, and only two received less than 75 per cent (P. A. Zalutskii with 281 votes—73 per cent, and M. M. Kharitonov with 264 votes—68 per cent). Write-in candidates stood no chance; I. N. Smirnov received 191 votes (49 per cent) for full member, and T. V. Sapronov 135 (35 per cent), but they were the only two who received a substantial number of votes.

<sup>4</sup> Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia i izucheniiia dokumentov noveishei istorii (RTsKhIDNI), Moscow, *fond* 50, *opis*’ 1, *delo* 58. The terms *biulleten*’ and *blank* were both used to describe these voting papers.

The procedure and pattern were similar in 1924, where fifty-two out of fifty-three full members received over 90 per cent of the 724 ballots cast by the 746 delegates eligible to vote (the exception was Piatakov, with 635 votes—88 per cent). Candidate member A. F. Tolokontsev was elected at Stalin's request, despite having received only 407 votes.<sup>5</sup> Some forty-seven individuals were write-in nominees for full membership, but the maximum number of votes received was twelve. There appears to have been some room for adding individuals to the official list at the congress itself, and K. I. Nikolaeva and A. V. Artiukhina were included, evidently as a result of an appeal to the Secretariat by the Department for Women Workers (*Otdel rabotnits*). On the other hand, an appeal by the Vladimir province delegation was not acted on; they had requested 'a member', based on the fact that the organization they represented included 100,000 workers.

By the time of the 1925 Party Congress the political tension between Zinoviev on the one hand, and Bukharin and Stalin on the other, was evident. The central list of nominees included Zinoviev and other 'oppositionists', but it was proposed by a group of party organizations which excluded Zinoviev's Leningrad base.<sup>6</sup> A total of 638 valid ballots were cast (from 665 delegates with voting rights). Only forty-eight out of sixty-three full members received more than 90 per cent of the vote (over 574 ballots). A relatively large number of 'centrally' proposed full members received less than 75 per cent of the vote (less than 478 ballots), including Kamenev (448), Zinoviev (441), and Zinoviev's ally G. E. Evdokimov (461). A neutral popular leader like Kalinin received 633 votes, but Stalin and Bukharin were relatively low with 578 and 582 votes respectively—although both results were over the 90 per cent mark. Trotsky, politically somewhere in the middle between the Leningraders and the leading group, received 514 votes. Fewer than half of the delegates (186) voted for one listed candidate member, Sevast'ianov, and he was dropped. At the suggestion of Ordzhonikidze, Stalin, and others, and after a show of hands in the congress, A. P. Serebrovskii ('organizer of the Baku oil industry') was proposed as a candidate member, and he received more votes than any other candidate—636.<sup>7</sup>

There was less diversity at the 15th Congress in 1927, which followed the expulsion from the Politburo of the major opponents of Stalin and Bukharin. A total of 898 delegates had voting rights; 855 valid ballots were cast and only two of seventy-one full members on the list received less than 90 per cent (i.e. 769 votes),

<sup>5</sup> *Trinadtsati s'ezd RKP(b), mai 1924 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), 591–2; RTsKhIDNI, *fond 52, opis' 1, delo 53*. S. S. Zorin, who received the next smallest number of votes, 435 (60%), was not questioned, so the dividing-line appears to have been 60% of votes cast. There is no obvious reason why A. F. Tolokontsev, Zorin, and K. V. Gei received under 550 votes; the next lowest was I. T. Smilga, with 615. Tolokontsev received an unusually high number of votes (99%) when he was put forward to be a full member at the following congress, in 1925.

<sup>6</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 54, opis' 1, delo 97*.

<sup>7</sup> *XIV s'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi partii (b), 18–31 dekabria 1925 g.: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: GIZ, 1926), 941.



and even those two were still elected.<sup>8</sup> Bukharin, Rykov, Stalin, and Tomskii all received over 98 per cent of the vote. Even in the 1920s, then, the situation was one in which rank-and-file voting delegates had little control over who would sit on the standing organs. The make-up of the Central Committee, all full members and nearly all candidate members, was determined in advance.<sup>9</sup>

It is the voting at the 17th Congress in 1934 which has attracted the greatest interest. This was above all because supposed votes against Stalin and for Kirov are sometimes taken as a motive for the latter's assassination eleven months later, and even for the Purges.<sup>10</sup> According to the records extant in the former party archive, some 1,059 red Central Committee voting papers (for 1,225 eligible delegates) were cast into thirteen ballot boxes.<sup>11</sup> Everyone on the list 'proposed by a meeting of representatives of all delegations at the congress' was elected onto the committee. All but four of the proposed full and candidate members received over 90 per cent of the possible number of votes (over 905 ballots); significantly, the exceptions (all candidate members) included the defeated 'Rightists' Rykov and Tomskii, with 858 and 801 votes respectively.<sup>12</sup> Stalin officially received 1,056 votes (i.e. a mere three votes were recorded against him), and Kirov 1,055. On the other hand, a Khrushchev-era source claimed that over 300 delegates voted against Stalin.<sup>13</sup> A surviving member of the counting commission (*schetnaia komissii*), V. M. Verkhovnykh, claimed that in fact 1,222 out of 1,225 eligible delegates voted and that, although he did not recall what happened exactly, some 100 voted against Stalin, Kaganovich, and Molotov.<sup>14</sup> Some accounts published in unofficial sources have repeated these charges, and Roy Medvedev believed that the falsification of the result was the work of L. M. Kaganovich, Stalin's congress 'manager'.<sup>15</sup> Assuming that Kaganovich had to falsify the vote in a hurry, and that Stalin's poor showing was not expected, then a ham-fisted result of this type could not be ruled out. For what it is worth, Kaganovich himself appears, at the very end of his life, to

<sup>8</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 56, opis' 2, delo 46*.

<sup>9</sup> This was true also for the Politburo. Recently published Politburo documents include an extract from the July 1930 Central Committee plenum in which Kalinin patiently explained to Voroshilov what 'en bloc' election to the Politburo meant ('Èto znachit vmeste, v tselom'); see O. V. Khlevniuk *et al.* (eds.), *Stalinskoe Politburo v 30-e gody: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Airo-XX, 1995), 95.

<sup>10</sup> N. Mikhailov and V. Naumov, 'Skol'ko delegatov XVII s"ezda partii goslovalo protiv Stalina', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 7, pp. 114–21.

<sup>11</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 59, opis' 2, delo 36*.

<sup>12</sup> The other exceptions were G. F. Grin'ko (858) and P. P. Liubchenko (844). The Rightist leaders Bukharin and Sokol'nikov, who were also nominated, did rather better.

<sup>13</sup> L. S. Shaumian, 'Na rubezhe pervykh piatiletok. K 30-letiiu XVII s"ezda partii', *Pravda*, 7 Feb. 1964, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Mikhailov and Naumov, 'Skol'ko delegatov', 114.

<sup>15</sup> Roi Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme* (Moscow: Progress, 1990), 295–7. The controversy continues. This interpretation has most recently been questioned by Arch Getty: see 'The Politics of Repression Revisited', in J. Arch Getty and Roberta T. Manning (eds.), *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 45 f., but supported by R. W. Davies in *Soviet History in the Yeltsin Era* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 185.

have denied involvement.<sup>16</sup> The conclusion of the main *glasnost*-era survey of this event, taking account of the contradictory recollections of survivors, was that while falsification could not be ruled out it was not a certainty either.<sup>17</sup>

The archives indicate that as a minimum there were *at least* 166 more delegates with voting rights than there were ballot papers. For Stalin to have in reality received a near unanimity of those who did vote—as the official version alleges—would also not have been unprecedented. Similar things happened to popular candidates at earlier congresses; only four out of 855 votes cast in 1927 were against Bukharin, and only fourteen against Stalin.<sup>18</sup> The 1934 result might be taken to mean that 13 per cent did not vote, or it might mean that a substantial number of ballots were destroyed. Not all delegates had voted at the 13th, 14th and 15th Congresses, where, respectively, 3 per cent (22/746), 4 per cent (27/665), and 5 per cent (43/898) did not vote.<sup>19</sup> Stalin still would have received 90 per cent of the vote even assuming that a ‘normal’ number of delegates, say 5 per cent (61 delegates), did not vote and that 105 ballot papers on which Stalin’s name was crossed out were destroyed by Kaganovich. What would have been affected was ‘only’ Stalin’s self-esteem and suspiciousness. No one has suggested that the destruction of ballot papers affected which individuals were elected or not elected to the Central Committee at the 17th Congress. This was managed, as it had been since at least 1919, by the top party leadership.

The leadership, then, effectively controlled the outcome of elections at party congresses. The situation was more complicated, however, because the leadership was having ‘elected’ to the Central Committee those individuals that it had already appointed to a range of key posts. Stalin alluded to this in a 1931 interview with a sympathetic German journalist:<sup>20</sup>

Among these seventy [full] members of the Central Committee are our best industrial leaders, our best co-operative leaders, our best managers of supplies, our best military men, our best propagandists and agitators, our best experts on state farms, on collective farms, on individual peasant farms, our best experts on the nations constituting the Soviet Union and on nationalities policy. In this areopagus is concentrated the wisdom of our party.

The early development of the system by which Central Committee members and candidate represented, *ex officio*, areas of the Soviet leadership, was discussed

<sup>16</sup> Feliks Chuev, *Tak govoril Kaganovich: Ispoved’ stalinskogo apostola* (Moscow: Otechestvo, 1992), pp. 68 f.

<sup>17</sup> Mikhailov and Naumov, ‘Skol’ko delegatov’, p. 121.

<sup>18</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond* 56, *opis’* 2, *delo* 36.

<sup>19</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond* 52 [13th Congress], *opis’* 1, *delo* 53; *fond* 54 [14th Congress], *opis’* 1, *delo* 97; *fond* 56 [15th Congress], *opis’* 2, *delo* 36. Unfortunately, details were not available of the voting papers of the 16th Congress in 1930.

<sup>20</sup> I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel’svo politicheskoi literatury, 1951), xiii. 107. The classical reference to the areopagus is also found in Lenin’s *What is to be Done?*: in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vi. 480.

in Chapter 1, and we borrow from Robert Daniels the concept of the ‘job slot’.<sup>21</sup> At the March–April 1922 party congress (the 11th), when Soviet Russia began to recover from the Civil War, the central state structure had been the most important sector, accounting for a third of Central Committee members and candidates (14/46, see Table 1.2). The pattern of representation from 1923 to 1934 is shown in Table 2.2. There were substantial changes during these twelve years, which reflected both the growing size of the Central Committee—from fifty-seven to 139—and the changing nature and scale of the central and regional components of the party-state system. This system was developed over the 1923–34 period, and reached a stable and rational stage of development at the 17th Congress in 1934. The mix of job slots will be discussed in detail here, especially for 1934, to give a concrete sense of what the Central Committee elite was like as it approached institutional maturity.

Central party representation on the Central Committee was fairly constant during these years; it was 7 per cent of total membership both in 1923 and in 1934. The Secretaries of the Central Committee, who controlled one or more of its departments (*otdely*), were elected from the CC and so were, by definition, all members. There were few of them, compared to what would come later: three (including Stalin) after the 1923 congress, five in 1927 (plus three candidates), and four in 1934. Some—but not all—directors (*zaveduiushchie*) of departments and sub-departments (*sektory* or *otdeleniia*) were also members.<sup>22</sup> In 1934 relatively few of the Central Committee were from the central apparat, but these individuals were doubtless very powerful. In addition to the four secretaries (Stalin, Zhdanov, Kaganovich, and Kirov) there were five heads of departments: Bauman (Science), Ezhov (Cadres), Mekhlis (Press), Poskrebyshv (Special Sector), and Stetskii (Agitprop). To these might be added, as members of the central party apparatus, Kosarev, the general secretary of the Komsomol, and Tovstukha, formerly a close aide of Stalin’s, who was deputy director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. (Gamarnik and Bulin, the heads of the Red Army’s political administration, are considered here to be essentially military figures, although they also had a central party role.)

Few aspects of the Stalinist administrative system have attracted more attention than the growth of the ‘apparatus’, the party (as opposed to state) machinery in the centre and the regions; many historians have seen this as the origin of Stalin’s power. A most important distinction has to be made between the Central Committee as the focus for the party’s political machinery (the apparat) and the Central

<sup>21</sup> Robert V. Daniels. ‘Evolution of Leadership Selection in the Central Committee, 1917–1927’, in Walter M. Pintner and Don K. Rowney (eds.), *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 355–68.

<sup>22</sup> For a recent useful but still incomplete guide to the structure of the developing apparat see the entries in *RTsKhIDNI: Kratkii putevoditel’* (Moscow: Blagovest, 1993), 7–20.

**Table 2.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1923–1934

	1923 CC		1924 CC		1925 CC		1927 CC		1930 CC		1934 CC	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Central party	4	7	6	7	10	9	8	7	11	8	10	7
Central State	12	21	18	21	26	25	36	30	43	31	51	37
Republic party	6	11	3	3	8	8	6	5	7	5	6	4
Republic state	7	12	6	7	7	7	6	5	9	7	7	5
Regional party	13	23	21	24	26	25	34	28	34	25	36	26
Regional state	6	11	12	14	11	10	12	10	7	5	8	6
Military	4	7	5	6	4	4	4	3	7	5	10	7
Police	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	2
Diplomatic	2	4	2	2	5	5	6	5	5	4	6	4
Media/Science/Arts	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	1
Unknown/ambiguous	2	4	13	15	6	6	6	5	10	7	0	0
TOTAL	57	100	87	100	106	100	121	100	138	100	139	100

*Notes:* The category ‘Central State’ includes central trade-union officials; it excludes people’s commissars (i.e. ministers) for the armed forces and foreign affairs. To allow comparison with later periods economic managers are included here as central state officials; nearly all had responsibility for areas of the economy that had more than a local significance and would later be handled by USSR branch-ministries. Again for reasons of long-term comparison, ‘Republic party’ refers to union republics, or to territories *that would later become* union republics. For the same reason institutions in the Russian republic (RSFSR) are treated as all-union institutions; key RSFSR commissariats became USSR commissariats after 1934. ‘Regions’ includes level of *oblast’*, *krai*, ASSR, AO, as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. ‘Diplomatic’ covers Comintern and Foreign Commissariat officials, including ambassadors.

Committee as a kind of plenary of the elite. Stalin did everything *in the name of* the Central Committee. But the relative weight of central apparat officials in the membership of the Central Committee did not increase. It was also the case that the proportion of Politburo and Orgburo members among the Central Committee became smaller. In 1923 they made up 26 per cent of the CC membership, but in 1934 only 17 per cent.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the party apparat, central *state* officials made up a growing proportion of the Central Committee in these years, and were always the largest single sub-group. The state structure in Moscow changed gradually from what had appeared in the Civil War years. Even with the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the end of 1922, the central organization was still Sovnarkom, the Council of People’s Commissars.<sup>24</sup> It had a chairman who was in

<sup>23</sup> In 1923 there were 15 individuals on the Politburo and the Orgburo (full members), and in 1934 23. The membership of the Politburo and the Orgburo also came from within the CC, but most of them were not officials in the central party machinery.

<sup>24</sup> The most useful list of all-Union institutions in this period is in R. W. Davies *et al.* (eds.), *Soviet Government Officials, 1922–41: A Handlist* (Birmingham: CREES, 1989).

effect prime minister (Rykov from 1924 to 1930, and Molotov after that), and was made up of People's Commissariats (i.e. ministries). In the 1920s the number of commissariats was small, ten or less, and they were generally comparable to the ministries of conventional states—foreign affairs, armed forces, finance, and so on, rather than 'branch ministries' responsible for particular sectors on the economy—as the commissariats would predominantly become in the late 1930s. When the Sovnarkom of the USSR was formed in July 1923 only five out of ten minister-level officials were in the Central Committee, but by 1927 the proportion was eight out of nine.<sup>25</sup> Some of the commissariats in the Russian republic (the RSFSR) were really of 'all-union' importance, and would become USSR commissariats after 1934; they also had representation on the Central Committee. In 1934 the nominal pinnacle of the state was represented by Kalinin, chairman of the Soviet Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), and by Enukidze, secretary of the Presidium of VTsIK. Molotov was chairman of Sovnarkom and the Council of Labour and Defence (STO), and Rudzutak was a deputy chairman. By this time all fourteen all-union commissariats were represented, usually at full-member level, as shown in Table 2.3, and there was also logical representation from key non-ministerial central state bodies and from RSFSR commissariats.

Representation of central state organizations was broad by 1934, and this would continue afterwards. Most striking was the emergence, following the first industrial spurt, of the economic branch ministries; these numbered eleven and involved twenty-two individuals—already 15 per cent of the total membership. This followed on from a situation in the 1920s when half-a-dozen members of the Central Committee had been involved in various organizations—trusts, and so on—running the state-owned parts of the NEP economy.

Moving out from the centre, the range of republican and regional party and state leaders represented in the Central Committee was wide. The USSR was formally created in December 1922, with four 'union' republics: Russia (the RSFSR), the Ukrainian SSR, the Belorussian SSR, and the Transcaucasian (Federal) SFSR. In the course of fifteen years or so the constitutional structure evolved; early in 1925 two new union republics were formed in Central Asia, the Uzbek SSR and the Turkmen SSR, followed by the Tadzhik SSR in 1929/31. With the new 1936 Constitution the Transcaucasian SFSR was broken up into the Armenian, Azerbaijan, and Georgian SSRs, and the Kazakh and Kirgiz SSRs were created from 'autonomous' republics formerly within the RSFSR. In size, population, and economic potential some of the republics were actually similar to 'normal' regions. On the other hand, distinct features of the republics were that they were largely populated by non-Russians and that they had a higher constitutional status. Union

<sup>25</sup> This takes into account the people's commissars and the chairman of the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh). The exception in 1927 was the head of the Commissariat of Posts and Telegraph, but even that commissariat had a CC-level head by January 1928.

**Table 2.3.** Central state job-slots on CC, 1934

Commissariat/Institution	CC full members	CC candidate members
USSR: People's Commissariats		
Chairman, Sovnarkom	V. M. Molotov Ia. E. Rudzutak (dep.) V. V. Kuibyshev (dep.)	—
Non-economic commissariats		
Army-Navy (NKVMD)	K. E. Voroshilov Ia. B. Gamarnik (dep.)	M. N. Tukhachevskii (dep.)
Foreign affairs (NKID)	M. M. Litvinov	G. Ia. Sokol'nikov (dep.)
State Control (NKRKI)	Ia. E. Rudzutak	—
Economic commissariats		
Agriculture (NKZem)	Ia. A. Iakovlev A. I. Krinitskii (dep.)	— —
Communications (NKSviazi)	I. P. Zhukov (dep.)	A. I. Rykov
Finance (NKFin)	G. F. Grin'ko	M. I. Kalmanovich (dep.)
Foreign Trade (NKVneshTorg)	—	A. P. Rozengol'ts Sh. Z. Eliava (dep.)
Heavy Industry (NKTiazhProm)	G. K. Ordzhonikidze M. M. Kaganovich (dep.) G. L. Piatakov (dep.)	I. P. Pavlunovskii (dep.) — —
Light Industry (NKLegProm)	I. E. Liubimov	I. G. Eremin (dep.)
State Farms (NKSovkhoz)	—	T. A. Iurkin
Supply (NKSnab)	A. I. Mikoian K. V. Ukhanov (dep.)	— —
Timber Industry (NKLes)	S. S. Lobov	—
Transport (NKPS)	A. A. Andreev	G. I. Blagonravov (dep.) V. I. Polonskii (dep.)
Water Transport (NKVodTrans)	N. I. Pakhomov	—
USSR: other central state bodies		
Gosplan	V. I. Mezhlauk (chairman)	V. V. Osinskii (dep.)
OGPU	G. G. Iagoda (chairman) V. A. Balitskii (dep.)	— —
Tsentrosoiuz	I. A. Zelenskii (chairman)	—
Committee of State Control	V. V. Kuibyshev N. K. Antipov (dep.)	— —
RSFSR		
Communal Enterprise. (NKKommKhoz RSFSR)	—	N. P. Komarov
Education (NKPros RSFSR)	A. S. Bubnov N. K. Krupskaja (dep.) G. M. Krzhizhanovskii (dep.)	— — —
Health (NKZdravoOkhr RSFSR)	—	G. N. Kaminskii
Light Industry (NKLegProm RSFSR)	—	K. K. Strievskii
Transport (NKPS RSFSR)	M. L. Rukhimovich	

*Note:* All existing 'all-union' ministry-level central state institutions are listed. Unless otherwise indicated the individual involved was People's Commissar (*Narkom*); 'dep.' means deputy head of the institution, usually Deputy People's Commissar. Important RSFSR posts which had *de facto* all-union importance are also included.

republic status was generally followed by a higher level of representation on the Central Committee. The Ukrainian SSR was important because of its size, its distinct population, and its industrial base, and this republic was especially well represented on the Central Committee. In 1925 the Ukrainian contingent comprised some eleven individuals, including two central secretaries, and four regional (*okrug*) secretaries.

By 1934 republican and regional representation on the Central Committee consisted for the most part of party rather than state officials. Soviet executive committees were state organs. The chairmen of the city and regional soviet executive committees from Moscow and Leningrad (four individuals) were elected to the 1934 Central Committee, but only three other chairmen of regional soviet executive committees (for Ivanovo, West Siberian, and Gor'kii regions). The exception to low state representation was for the union republics, a number of whose (state) prime ministers were on the Central Committee (see Table 2.4).

Regional administration was organized after the Revolution mainly on the basis of the old Tsarist province (*guberniia*). There were about forty provinces in the European part of the Russian Republic in 1926 (i.e. excluding the Ukraine, Belorussia, and Transcaucasia), with ten more in Siberia. The Ukraine also contained eight regional units. As was the case in the centre, the regions (provinces) were coming more under the effective control of party rather than state institutions. However, only a few regional (provincial) party committee (*gubkom*) leaders were on the Central Committee in the mid-1920s. Excluding Moscow and Leningrad, only four of the other forty provinces in European RSFSR were represented on the Central Committee by their party secretaries in 1925 (Tula, Tver', and Nizhnii Novgorod provinces and the Don *okrug*).<sup>26</sup> What was more common in the 1920s and early 1930s was 'regional' representation in the Central Committee in the person of the secretary of the large *party* region (*oblast'*). These party regions of the 1920s were bigger than the administrative divisions of the later Soviet period known by the same name (*oblast'*); each incorporated a number of provinces (*gubernii*).

Table 2.2 indicates that 'regional party' leaders made up from a quarter to a third of the Central Committee membership throughout the period 1923–34. This apparent continuity masks an important change. This category included for the early Central Committees 'junior' city party secretaries (i.e. other than the 'first' secretary) from Moscow and Leningrad or even party secretaries from key industrial urban boroughs (*raiony*) within those cities. In 1925, for example, a geographically tiny Moscow borough was represented on the Central Committee but not the giant agricultural province of Saratov. This corresponded to the party's concentration of strength within the metropolitan areas, which were islands of

<sup>26</sup> Representation of Ukrainian provinces was proportionally higher. In 1925 there were four regional secretaries on the CC (for Kharkov, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk, and Lugansk *okrugs*).

**Table 2.4.** Republican state job-slots on CC, 1934

Republic	Full members	Candidate members
RSFSR	D. E. Sulimov (prime minister) D. Z. Lebed' (dep. prime minister)	— —
Ukrainian SSR	G. I. Petrovskii (chairman, TsIK) V. Ia. Chubar' (prime minister)	— —
Belorussian SSR	—	N. M. Goloded (prime minister)
Transcaucasus SFSR	—	G. M. Musabekov (chairman, TsIK)
Turkmen SSR	—	—
Uzbek SSR	—	—
Tadzhik SSR	—	—
Kirgiz ASSR	—	—
Kazakh ASSR	—	U. D. Isaev (prime minister)

*Note:* 'Prime minister' means chairman or deputy chairman of the local sovnrakom (council of ministers). 'Chairman, TsIK' is chairman of republic central (soviet) executive committee, the 'head of state'.

urban Communist power in a provincial peasant sea. In 1926 only one Soviet citizen in forty was an inhabitant of Moscow or Leningrad, but more than one party member in six lived in these two cities.<sup>27</sup> In 1925 officials in charge of local affairs in Moscow and Leningrad (as opposed to officials in central institutions based in Moscow) made up a fifth of the Central Committee. There were eleven Muscovites, and a further ten were from Leningrad or the related Northwestern Bureau of the Central Committee. In 1927 there were at least fourteen representatives from Leningrad. These included Kirov, the new city first party secretary, the second party secretary, the chairman of the city soviet (state) executive committee, and the head of his supply organization. There were three party borough committee secretaries and the head of the agitprop department of the city party committee. The local Leningrad state and economic administration was also represented by city soviet economic organizers, the head of the city Industrial Bureau (*Promburo*), and the head of the city trade-union council (*profsovet*), as well as two local trade-union leaders. Important local industries were represented in the form of two 'trust' chairmen, for branches of industry which were especially strong in the northern capital—engineering and electrical equipment. Much the same pattern was repeated in Moscow.

In contrast, by 1934 the republic and regional representation on the Central Committee had been expanded and rationalized (see Table 2.5). Nearly all of the

<sup>27</sup> This ratio changed little even after the industrialization of the country began. In 1937 the two capitals together had 236,000 full members, out of a national total of 1,450,000.



**Table 2.5.** Regional party job-slots on CC, 1934

Area	Full members	Candidate members
European Russia		
Northern krai	V. I. Ivanov	—
Leningrad oblast	S. M. Kirov	B. P. Pozern
	M. S. Chudov	—
Western oblast	I. P. Rumiantsev	—
Moscow oblast	L. M. Kaganovich	—
	N. S. Khrushchev	—
Ivanovo oblast	I. P. Nosov	—
Gor'kii krai	A. A. Zhdanov	E. K. Pramnek
Central Black Earth oblast	I. M. Vareikis	—
Middle Volga krai	—	V. P. Shubrikov
Lower Volga krai	—	—
Saratov krai	—	A. M. Shteingardt
Stalingrad krai	—	V. V. Ptukha
North Caucasus krai	E. G. Evdokimov	—
Azov-Black Sea oblast	B. P. Sheboldaev	—
Crimea [oblast]	—	B. A. Semenov
Bashkir ASSR	—	Ia. B. Bykin
Tatar ASSR	—	A. K. Lepa
Ukrainian SSR	S. V. Kosior	P. P. Liubchenko
	P. P. Postyshev	N. N. Popov
Chernigov oblast	—	—
Dnepropetrovsk oblast	M. M. Khataevich	—
Kiev oblast	—	N. N. Demchenko
Kharkov oblast	P. P. Postyshev	—
Odessa oblast	—	E. I. Veger
Stalino oblast	—	S. A. Sarkisov
Vinnitsa oblast	—	—
Moldavian ASSR	—	—
Belorussian SSR	—	N. F. Gikalo
Transcaucasian SFSR	L. P. Beria	—
Armenia	—	—
Azerbaijdzhan	—	M. D. Bagirov
Georgia	—	—
Urals and Siberia		
(Urals oblast)		
Cheliabinsk oblast	K. V. Ryndin	—
Sverdlovsk oblast	I. D. Kabakov	—
West Siberian krai	R. I. Eikhe	—
	K. I. Nikolaeva	—
East Siberian krai	M. O. Razumov	—

**Table 2.5.** (*cont.*)

Area	Full members	Candidate members
Far Eastern Krai	L. I. Lavrent'ev	—
Iakut ASSR	—	—
Central Asia		
Turkmen SSR	—	—
Uzbek SSR	A. Ikramov	—
Tadzhik SSR	—	G. I. Broido
Kazakh ASSR	L. I. Mirzoian	—
Kirgiz ASSR	—	—

*Note:* All existing regional-level administrative areas in the USSR are listed. The individuals noted were mostly party first secretaries.

major territorial administrative units in the USSR had a presence on the Central Committee. This was at the expense, at least in proportional terms, of Moscow and Leningrad, although there was still a handful of city borough party secretaries on the CC.

The armed forces and secret police were represented in the expanding total membership of the Central Committee, although the army's share sagged in the late 1920s and that of the police took some time to develop. In 1927 the armed forces were represented by K. E. Voroshilov, I. S. Unshlikht (deputy people's commissar), A. S. Bubnov, and P. I. Baranov (air-force commander), all Bolshevik veterans rather than military professionals. In 1925 there was no one specifically from the OGPU, the secret police; Dzerzhinskii was in overall charge of the security police, but his main function was that of Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. V. R. Menzhinskii, the deputy chairman, and effective head, of the OGPU, was not even a congress delegate. In 1927 the OGPU was represented, but only by Menzhinskii, who had succeeded Dzerzhinskii as head. International-relations specialists also had little representation. In the 1925 Central Committee the Foreign Commissar, Chicherin, was present for the first time, as were the ambassadors to Britain and France.

By 1934 the Red Army had three full and seven candidate members, but the proportion of army representatives in the Central Committee as a whole was about the same. From the Red Army central administration there were people's commissar Voroshilov, as well as Ia. B. Gamarnik and A. S. Bulin from the Political Administration, A. I. Egorov (chief of staff), S. M. Budennyi (Inspector of Cavalry), M. N. Tukhachevskii (chief of equipment), and Unshlikht (air-force commander). The regional commands represented on the Central Committee were the most important 'front-line' ones: the Ukrainian Military District (I. E. Iakir), the Belorussian Military District (I. P. Uborevich), and the Special Far Eastern Army (V. K. Bliukher). The police presence was still low. Iagoda and

Balitskii have already been listed, as heads of OGPU; the only other policeman elected to the Central Committee in 1934 was T. D. Deribas, who was responsible for the extensive OGPU operations in the Far East. Finally, there were in 1934 still only a few individuals who dealt with relations with the outside world. D. Z. Manuil'skii, the head of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, was a member, as were Comintern leaders V. G. Knorin and I. A. Piatnitskii. The Trade Union International (*Profintern*) was represented by its secretary, S. A. Lozovskii. Surprisingly, at the dawning of the Popular Front era the 'conventional' diplomatic corps was still not represented; the ambassadors to Britain, France, and Germany were not on the Central Committee, and neither was the first deputy people's commissar of foreign affairs.

The losers in terms of Central Committee representation in these decades were the trade-union leaders. In the early 1920s their numbers on the CC had reflected the party's links with the small working class. In 1927 they made up 8 per cent of the total, with least ten labour leaders. There were the chairman, presidium chairman, and secretary of the All-Union Trade Union Council (*VTsSPS*), and the chairmen of the Metal Workers Union and the Textile Workers Union; in addition, there were two union leaders each from Moscow and Leningrad, and one from the Ukraine. After 1929, with the political disgrace of trade-union leader Tomskii and the acceleration of industrialization, the unions suffered a decline in power and prestige; no all-union trade-union congress took place between 1932 and 1949. By 1934 trade-union representation was confined to only five individuals, and in subsequent Central Committees the trade-union presence would become even smaller.

By 1934 the job-slot system within the Soviet areopagus had reached maturity. There would be little change in this system until near the very end of the Soviet era, certainly not at the time of the 18th Party Congress in 1939. The paradox was that, just as this system reached maturity, the occupiers of the job slots were wiped out, almost to a man.

The changing nature of this Soviet elite from the end of the Civil War to the mid-1930s is a central and contentious question. Much the greater part of the elite who were on the Central Committee ten years after Lenin's death had not been there in 1917–23. At its crudest this could be seen as the replacement of 'genuine' Leninists, elected from within the revolutionary party, by appointees of Joseph Stalin. As we saw in Chapter 1, much of Trotsky's analysis of the 'betrayal' of the revolution was based on the conflict between a Bolshevik Old Guard (the 'proletarian vanguard') and a new generation of bureaucrats. At the end of the 1920s, and on the brink of total defeat, the Oppositionists made the same point. The 'Platform of the 13', which appeared in September 1927, called for a general renovation of the party, including the Central Committee. It was based, in part, on Lenin's letters of 26 December 1922 in which he had expressed a preference for

giving Central Committee membership to workers (*rabochie*) with links to the rank and file, and not predominantly to 'those who have had a long period of Soviet employment . . . because these workers [*rabochie*] have already acquired certain traditions and certain prejudices which are just the ones we want to struggle against'. The Platform complained about the social basis of the current Central Committee, dominated by a Right deviation based on middle peasants and better-paid workers and employees, and by a centre group based on the party machine.<sup>28</sup>

It was not only Trotsky and the Opposition who claimed a change was taking place in the elite in the 1920s. As already discussed in Chapter 1, later students of Russian Communism—such as Mosse, Schueller, Daniels, and Hough—saw an early replacement of theoreticians by organizers. Robert Daniels's influential interpretation, continuing into the early 1920s, put forward a dual development combining both a certain 'type' of Communist who was advanced to the elite and a mechanism for that advancement. The Communists who advanced were the 'apparatus men', 'the kind of people who performed well in a hierarchical, disciplined organisation'; they were pragmatic, but devoted to the Lenin of the early days. In contrast, the Left (the 'Conscience of the Revolution' according to Daniels) supposedly kept to the ideals of 1917. The mechanism for the defeat of one by the other was the 'circular flow of power'. Whoever controlled the party apparatus could use the power of appointment to place supporters in various regional and other posts. These regional leaders chose the delegations to party congresses, who in turn elected the members of the Central Committee, who chose their own executive organs—including the officials controlling the party apparatus.<sup>29</sup> Much more is now known about the development of the *nomenklatura*

<sup>28</sup> Iu. Fel'shtinskii (ed.), *Arkhiv Trotskogo: Kommunisticheskaia oppozitsiia v SSSR, 1923–1927* (Moscow: Terra, 1990), iv, 109, 150 f., 154; Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, xlv, 347. In the 'Platform of the 13' the Central Committee was divided into three 'fundamental tendencies': the right deviation, the centre, and the 'Leninist wing'. Each was based, in Marxist terms, on an underlying social class. The first, right, tendency was itself divided into two sub-groups, one based on the middle peasants (Rykov, A. P. Smirnov, Kalinin, Petrovskii, Chubar', Kaminskii, 'and others'), the other on the better-paid workers and employees (Tomskii, Mel'nichanskii, Dogadov, 'and others'). The second, centre, tendency was 'the *apparatno-tsentristskoe* one' (the centre group, based on the party machine, or *apparatur*). '[T]he present Politburo' was led by Stalin, Molotov, Uglanov, Kaganovich, Mikoian and Kirov, 'generalized' by Bukharin, and reflected 'the caste of administrators'; an interesting omission from the centre Politburo group was Rudzutak. The third tendency were the Opposition, 'the Leninist wing of the party'; included here were the Central Committee members who had signed the Platform of the 13: G. E. Evdokimov, Kamenev, Piatakov, Rakovskii, Smilga, Trotsky, and Zinoviev. This breakdown was not very helpful, as it only specifically mentioned nine rightists (two of whom—Kaminskii and Mel'nichanskii—were candidate members) and seven centrists, when the CC had 63 full members and 43 candidate members.

<sup>29</sup> The circular flow of power was described by Daniels in 'Soviet Politics Since Khrushchev', in John W. Strong (ed.), *The Soviet Union Under Brezhnev and Kosygin* (New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1971), 20. The essence of the mechanism was, however, put forward in an earlier form in Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution: Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 167–71, along with a discussion of the two types of leader.

system in the 1920s, which gave the party's personnel organs wide powers in the assignment of individuals to posts.<sup>30</sup> Hunter and Szyrmer have recently attempted to establish an important contrast between an Old Bolshevik elite who were the makers of the Revolution and leaders whom they call 'new Bolsheviks', men who were in favour of a 'cavalry-charge' approach to the economy. The New Bolsheviks, for them, bore responsibility for the nature of super-industrialization and forced collectivization in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>31</sup> As we have seen, other historians have made much of the rise in the 1920s of a generation of Civil War leaders.<sup>32</sup>

The issue of changes in the elite has already been discussed in Chapter 1, with the comparison between those elected to the Central Committee before and after 1920. A similar approach can be used to consider a possible change in the 1920s and 1930s: comparing those who were elected to the Central Committee before and after 1923. This involves looking first at the revolutionary elite of 1917–23 and then at the 'new' leaders, who were first elected to the Central Committee from 1923 onwards (up and including 1934). There were seventy-eight individuals in the revolutionary elite group and 187 in the second group, who for clarity's sake will be called the 'new entrants'.<sup>33</sup>

It turns out that the revolutionary elite and the new entrants were born at roughly the same time. They lived through the same events. The median year of birth for the revolutionary elite was 1884; for the new entrants it was 1890. If the 'first generation' of the elite are defined as those born before 1901, and the 'second generation' as those born from 1901 to 1920, then the first generation almost completely dominated both the revolutionary elite and the new entrants, that is, the Central Committee as a whole between 1917 and 1937. Even as late as the Central Committee elected in 1934 there were only three second-generation members (A. V. Kosarev, M. E. Mikhailov, and A. P. Zaveniagin). On the other

<sup>30</sup> On the origins of the *nomenklatura* see T. P. Korzhikhina and Iu. Iu. Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovlenie, mekhanizmy deistviia', *Voprosy istorii*, 7 (1993), 25–31.

<sup>31</sup> H. Hunter and J. Szyrmer, *Faulty Foundations: Soviet Economic Policies, 1928–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 18. Hunter and Szyrmer explicitly reject the term 'Stalinist' for this group of 'new Bolsheviks'. The group members were seen by them to have had common interests with Stalin, but not to have been his creatures. It will be recalled that Werner Mosse used the same 'Old Bolshevik/New Bolshevik' dichotomy 25 years earlier in his analysis of the 1917–23 elite (W. E. Mosse, 'Makers of the Soviet Union,' *Slavonic and East European Review*, 47 (1968), 141–54). There is a substantial consistency between the two arguments, but this not something which Hunter and Szyrmer explore, and they appear to have developed the terminology independently.

<sup>32</sup> See Chapter 1. Lewin stressed the role of Civil War veterans in Stalin's entourage in *The Making of the Soviet System* (London: Methuen, 1985), 24, as did von Hagen in *Soldiers of the Proletarian Dictatorship: The Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State, 1917–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 334, and Trotsky in *Predannaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow: NII Kul'tury, 1991), 78.

<sup>33</sup> A total of 236 individuals were elected to the CC between 1923 and 1934 (inclusive), but 49 of these had also been elected at some point between 1917 and 1922. The term 'new entrant' was chosen on purpose to be as neutral a term as possible. It simply means those who first entered the Central Committee from 1923 onwards.

hand, the Soviet leadership were, in international terms, remarkably young, a decade or two younger than their opposite numbers in conventional governments. Rykov was 43 when he succeeded Lenin as prime minister in 1924; Molotov was not yet 40 when he succeeded Rykov in 1930. Ramsay MacDonald, the British prime minister, was 58 in 1924 and 64 in 1930; President Calvin Coolidge was 52 in 1924, Herbert Hoover was 56 in 1930. Indeed, the most striking comparisons are with later Soviet periods: N. I. Ryzhkov was 56 when he took over as perestroika prime minister in 1985, and his immediate predecessor (N. A. Tikhonov) was, on retirement, twice Molotov's 1930 age. In a normal situation the Soviet leaders of the 1920s and early 1930s could have expected to be in post for a long time.

Among the revolutionary elite (see Table 1.4), 89 per cent (69/78) joined the Bolshevik Party before 1917, 10 per cent joined in 1917, and 1 per cent after 1917. As for the new entrants, they too were overwhelmingly veterans of the pre-revolutionary radical Left. About a third (64/187) joined the party before 1907. Half the total (96/187) joined between 1908 and the end of 1917; of these, only thirty-two as late as 1917 itself. Only 14 per cent (27/187) of the new entrants joined the Bolshevik Party after it had taken power, and all of these had joined during the Civil War—sixteen joined in 1918, seven in 1919, and four in 1920. At least a third of this 14 per cent were actually revolutionary veterans, having belonged to other radical parties.<sup>34</sup>

The Bolshevik Revolution had been a youth revolution, led for the most part by young men under 35. Furthermore, the post-revolutionary leaders were drawn from a pool of talent made up largely of those who had been members of the RSDRP(b) before February 1917; at that time the Bolsheviks, far from being a 'party of government', were a tiny underground radical party, staffed by social, intellectual, and ethnic outsiders. Lenin's theory of the vanguard party had been successful beyond his own expectations. The 'organization of revolutionaries' that Lenin called for in *What Is To Be Done?* not only 'overturned Russia' but staffed the top echelons of the Soviet leadership in the Civil War years, during the New Economic Policy, and in Stalin's Great Breakthrough. What the data for both age and revolutionary experience show is that the gates to immediate or potential elite status opened with the Revolution of 1917 for both the

<sup>34</sup> The 27 people among the new entrants whose year of party entry was 1918, 1919, or 1920 were for the most part either very young in 1917 or had been in other parties. N. P. Chaplin, U. D. Isaev, A. V. Kosarev, D. I. Matveev, M. E. Mikhailov, and A. I. Ugarov were 18 years old or younger at the time of the Revolution. G. I. Broido, Chicherin, Lozovskii, and N. N. Popov had been Mensheviks; A. I. Egorov, G. F. Grinko, P. P. Liubchenko, and D. I. Matveev had been SRs or Borotbists (Ukrainian Left SRs); E. G. Evdokimov had been an Anarcho-Syndicalist; and Mekhlis a member of Poalei Tzion (the Jewish Workers Party). Few details are known of the other 12 (6%), with the exception of Civil War hero Budennyi—a career NCO in the Tsarist cavalry. Of these 12 the birth dates of I. I. Kozlov, M. K. Oshvintsev, and S. M. Sobolev are not known, so they may have been too young to have been in another party.

revolutionary elite and the 'new entrants' of 1923–34—and then closed again. The Revolution was a defining moment for the elite. In the mid-1930s the elite was still a projection of the underground party which had won power two decades earlier in the Revolution and Civil War. Under the Leninist monopoly of power it had never let go.

The Communist Party grew very rapidly after the seizure of power, and the Civil War period of 1918–20 naturally served as a most important time of recruitment. Workers and peasants who had been politically inert before February 1917 became the Soviet officials of the 1920s. However, the notion that *at the level of the Central Committee* the Civil War threw up a generation of leaders does not stand up to close scrutiny. Biographies that are available would suggest that the majority of Central Committee members in the 1920s and 1930s had been active participants of the Civil War, working as commissars in the Red Army or organizing the civilian rear. There is no evidence to suggest that the experiences in 1918–20 of the new entrants were different from those of the revolutionary elite, the Central Committee members of 1917–23. In reality, 'oppositionist' CC members like Trotsky, Smilga, Smirnov, Rozengol'ts, or Sokol'nikov had been among the most important leaders of the Civil War Red Army, and if anyone should have been coarsened and radicalized, it was them. The Civil War did have a serious impact on the Central Committee elite, but it radicalized the *whole* elite, made the *whole* elite more prepared to use stern measures. The change was psychological rather than generational.

The ethnic origins of the revolutionary elite and the new entrants were similar. Among the revolutionary elite 52 per cent (40/77 [78]) were Russian, 17 per cent were Jews. (The percentage is based on those whose nationality is known. The figure in brackets after the actual dominator is the *ideal* denominator, the total size of the group in question, including unknowns.) Among the new entrants the nationality of 163 out of 187 is known. Some 58 per cent (94/163) were Russian, and 15 per cent were Jews, and the latter were still the second largest ethnic group. Even for the end of this period, among those elected to the Central Committee for the first time in 1934 Russians made up 54 per cent (72/133) of those whose nationality was known,<sup>35</sup> and the Jews were 17 per cent. As it would turn out, ethnic diversity was one of the distinctive features of the elite from the Revolution to the end of the 1930s—and this was reflected too in the prominent role played by members of ethnic minorities in the top leadership, men like the Georgians Stalin, Ordzhonikidze, and Beria, the Jews Kaganovich and Mekhlis, the Pole Kosior, the Armenian Mikoian, or the Latvian Rudzutak. Never again would the minorities have such influence, either in the top leadership or at the level of the Central Committee. This again followed from the unique revolutionary origins of the elite when the gates to power opened; such 'outsiders' could not have reached high administrative posts in 'normal' times.

<sup>35</sup> Of 152 elected in 1930 and 1934 (and not in 1917–23) the nationalities of 137 are known.

Information is available on the social background of 114 (out of 187) of the new entrants. Of these, 34 per cent had fathers who were workers and 25 per cent had fathers who were peasants, giving a combined plebeian total of 59 per cent; the remainder of fathers had been in non-manual professions. This is about the same as for the revolutionary elite, where 21 per cent (16/77) came from the workers and 31 per cent from the peasants, giving a combined total lower-class share of 52 per cent. It is an irony that the elite seem to have been more urban-based in the 1920s and 1930s than it would ever be for the next half-century. Of those for whom information is available, some 42 per cent (59/141 [187]) were born in villages. This is a substantially lower proportion than among those elected to the Central Committee in 1939, 1941, or 1952; in this group 59 per cent (159/268 [328]) were born in villages.<sup>36</sup>

There is no obvious difference in educational attainment between the two groups, as far as can be judged from the information available. As we saw in Chapter 1 (Table 1.6), 40 per cent (31/78) of the revolutionary elite attended some kind of higher educational institution, 33 per cent at least began some kind of secondary education, and the rest, 27 per cent, had only a primary education or none at all. For the new entrants there is relevant information for only about two-fifths (78/187). What is available suggests a broadly similar pattern to that in the revolutionary elite: before the revolution 49 per cent had entered higher education, and 27 per cent intermediate; 24 per cent had just a basic education or no formal education at all. It is most likely, however, that many of those for whom we have no educational information had only a primary or unfinished secondary education, which was not considered worth including in biographical notes. If this were the case, the proportion of the total with only a basic education could be twice the figure given above. The later year of birth of the new entrants was a factor making them—as a group—somewhat less well educated than the revolutionary elite. The median year of birth was 1890 rather than 1884, and many of the new entrants were of an age to have had their higher education disrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, not to mention the Revolution. But both were much better educated than the second level of the elite, represented by party congress delegates. In 1934 only 10 per cent of these had a higher education, and 31 per cent a secondary; two-fifths of these had attained this level only during the period of the 1st Five-Year Plan.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The figures for fathers' occupations can do no more than show general trends. For the new entrants data is lacking on 40% (73/187) of fathers' occupations; these people might have been of disproportionately 'non-manual' origin and concealed the fact, although it seems more likely that they were roughly the same as the main group. The figure for the post-1939 Central Committee includes a few survivors of the 1934 cohort. The urban-rural divide can be accepted but, given the number of unknowns, with caution. The next elite level down puts this in perspective: according to the report at the 1934 congress some 60% of delegates were workers or peasants; see *XVII s"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b): Stenograficheskie otchet* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 22.

<sup>37</sup> The 1930 education level of delegates was reported in 1934 to have been 4% higher and 16% secondary (*XVII s"ezd*, 22).



Moshe Lewin has argued that '[a]fter 1929, the party was led by different people', 'an iron guard of energetic, hard-driving, authoritarian men of action'.<sup>38</sup> Hunter and Szyrmer saw a difference between Old Bolsheviks and New Bolsheviks. Neither distinction is borne out by the evidence. The most important conclusion here is that our two groups, the revolutionary elite, elected to the Central Committee between 1917 and 1922, and the new entrants, first elected from 1923 onwards, were actually similar. This is like the comparisons made in the last chapter between old and new (pre-post-1920) revolutionary elites. There were differences of social origin and education, but these could be found *within* the revolutionary elite group and *within* the new entrant group. The same thing could be said about their ethnic origins. The new entrants had slightly fewer party veterans, but Old Bolsheviks (pre-October 1917 party members) prevailed throughout. The range of ages across the whole period 1917–37 was not great; nearly all were born before 1901, nearly all had grown up in Imperial Russia, nearly all had been active veterans of the Revolution and Civil War. It is reasonable to argue that the attitudes of the elite as a whole had been shaped by the Civil War and the holding of power. The *outlook* of the holders of national posts was different from what it had been when they were rank-and-file party members in 1917. But that is not the same as saying that these posts were held by quite different types of people. If the Soviet elite is taken to be the several hundred people who held Central Committee posts over the two decades after 1917, it is unjustified to talk of Stalinists replacing Leninists, careerists replacing revolutionaries, or 'New Bolsheviks' replacing Old Bolsheviks. What is remarkable is not the replacement of one elite group by another in the 1920s but the *continuity* over that period and the *cohesiveness* of a revolutionary elite that was still in place on the eve of 1937. That continuity, that cohesiveness, would be one source of the destruction of the whole elite.

Not only were the revolutionary elite and new entrants similar, but there was substantial personal overlap between them, that is, many of the revolutionary elite stayed on in the Central Committee throughout the 1920s and early 1930s (see Table 2.6). As time passed, the *proportion* of CC members who had served in 1917–23 went down, but that was partly because the committee was expanding. This was something else that makes any supposed break in the 1920s unconvincing: well over half of the people who were Central Committee members in 1922 would be elected to the CC in 1934.

## Early Stalinists

It is as hard to select typical members from among the 'new entrants' as it was to do so from the 'revolutionary elite'. New figures were rising to elite positions in

<sup>38</sup> Mosse, *Makers*, 24. Lewin has also developed at length a neo-Menshevik argument about how the party was 'contaminated' by Russian peasant backwardness (Lewin, *Making*, 42 f., 198, 223, 240, 274–76, 310, etc.). This argument has some credibility for the party rank and file in the 1920s, or for the post-1937 elite generation; it not convincing for the Central Committee elite of 1917–37.

**Table 2.6.** Continuity of CC members, 1917–1934

	1922 CC	1923 CC	1924 CC	1925 CC	1927 CC	1930 CC	1934 CC
Total CC	46	57	87	106	121	138	139
1917–23 group (n = 78)	46	39	40	39	31	31	28
1934 CC	26	30	41	60	72	93	139
1917–23 group (%)	100	68	46	37	26	22	20
1934 CC (%)	57	53	47	57	60	67	100

*Note:* This table shows the relative weight of two groups in the CCs in the 1920s and 1930s. The first are the veteran leaders of the ‘1917–23 group’ (the ‘revolutionary elite’) who had *served* on the CC between 1917 and 1923 (i.e. had been *elected* between 1917 and 1922). The second are those elected to the 1934 CC. For example, among members elected to the 1923 CC (serving 1923–4) 68% had also been elected to the CC before 1923, and 53% would be elected to the CC at the 1934 congress; among members elected to the 1930 CC (serving 1930–4) 22% had also been elected to the CC before 1923, and 67% would be elected to the CC at the 1934 congress. It was, of course, possible for an individual to be in both groups, to serve in 1917–23 *and* be elected in 1934; Joseph Stalin was a case in point.

the mid- and late 1920s, however, and two of them will be discussed in detail, Iosif Vareikis and Panas Liubchenko.

Before that, however, it is worth looking at the further careers of the two members of the revolutionary elite discussed in Chapter 1. Both Andrei Andreev and Nikolai Krestinskii were politically active in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1920s Andreev became more than a rank-and-file Central Committee member and was effectively elevated to the inner circle. Krestinskii, on the other hand, was demoted. During the Civil War he had held a number of very important central posts (notably those of commissar of finance and Central Committee secretary), but he was never again a Central Committee member after March 1921. The reason for this was partly political disfavour and partly the fact that he held posts that were just under the current Central Committee job-slot threshold. The two factors were, of course, linked. Like a number of the old party guard he was made an ambassador in the 1920s, in this case to Germany. Although Weimar Germany was Russia’s most important foreign ‘partner’, diplomats rarely achieved Central Committee status in this period. By 1934 Krestinskii was 1st deputy commissar for foreign affairs, but even that post did not carry Central Committee rank.

Andreev, by contrast, had in the 1920s and 1930s real political power and enjoyed a very varied political career, taking in almost everything *except* conventional diplomatic work. His career was an extreme example of a party generalist who could be sent to any sector to advance Stalin’s power and policies. He was chairman of the Union of Railway Workers from 1922 to 1927, a period when the weight of the trade unionists in the Central Committee was as strong as it would ever be. He was already a member of the Central Committee’s Orgburo, and in 1924–5 he served as a CC secretary, alongside his trade-union responsibilities. He was active in the struggle against the opposition in the mid-1920s. When the

so-called 'Savage Division' was dispatched to Leningrad to unseat Zinoviev after the 1925 party congress, Andreev was one of its leaders. Politburo rank followed. In July 1926, in the same plenum that removed Zinoviev from the Politburo, Andreev became a candidate Politburo member, along with four other members of Stalin's 'team'—Kaganovich, Kirov, Mikoian, and Ordzhonikidze. Andreev was still only 30. He would remain on the Politburo, with one short gap, until 1952. Molotov was right to say that Andreev—like Kalinin—was not part of the 'ruling group' that existed in every Politburo, but he was still a very important figure.<sup>39</sup> Towards the end of the 1920s agriculture and food supply were becoming a central problem, and in 1927 Stalin made Andreev first secretary of the North Caucasus regional committee, in one of the most important agricultural regions. Andreev was there throughout the initial period of compulsory procurements and collectivization. At the end of 1930 came another move back to the centre as—simultaneously—chairman of the Central Control Commission, commissar of the Workers and Peasants Inspection (RKI), and deputy prime minister. From October 1931 to February 1935 he was near the centre of the industrialization drive as commissar of Transport.<sup>40</sup> In 1935–46 he was again a Central Committee secretary, where he had responsibility for appointments.

Andreev prospered because Stalin had confidence in him, and he was an unswerving Stalin loyalist. It is hard to identify a particular social 'type' which Stalin preferred in his inner political circle.<sup>41</sup> Andreev was evidently a 'true believer', an ascetic veteran of the underground and Civil War struggles. The peasant's son who had been filling samovars and washing floors ten years before he entered the Central Committee owed everything to the party. The Revolution and Civil War were formative experiences. Fragments of Andreev's letters to Dora Khazan, his wife, show a continuing 'Civil War' mentality. Grain-requisitioning in the North Caucasus in 1927 was a 'front'; and he was 'in command'. He took Marxism seriously; in 1931, for example, he was writing to his wife, about his current reading of *Capital* and the *Critique of Political Economy*.<sup>42</sup> He would make

<sup>39</sup> F. I. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym: Iz dnevnika F. Chueva* (Moscow: Terra, 1991), 424. A good measure of Andreev's power was the amount of time he spent in Stalin's office. Khlevniuk presents this in tabular form for 1931–9; Andreev saw Stalin less than the members of the dictator's innermost circle, but more than a number of other Politburo members; see *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody* (Moscow: Rosspen, 1996), 290 f.

<sup>40</sup> Andreev, according to his daughter, told his wife that he volunteered to take over transport at a Politburo meeting. "Stalin said things were very difficult in transport. Who wants to take over this area?" All were silent. I had already been thinking about this difficult situation for a long time and said, "I will take on transport". My offer was approved.' A. A. Andreev, *Vospominaniia, pis'ma* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), 287.

<sup>41</sup> Stalin's 'team' included such different men as Beria, Ezhov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, and Voroshilov. Among these there was a wide range social origin, education, ethnic background, and general experience; perhaps all that can be said is that they tended *not* to be Stalin's contemporaries or Old Bolsheviks from an intelligentsia background.

<sup>42</sup> Andreev, *Vospominaniia*, 208 f., 214 f. Andreev's letters to Dora Khazan include one sent from the Urals in 1939 recalling nostalgically the romantic days when they had lived and worked there in the Civil War (pp. 218).

an extraordinary defence of Stalin at a 1953 party plenum,<sup>43</sup> and even his Brezhnev-era memoirs show a continuing loyalty to Stalin.

Andreev had established himself firmly in the central leadership. When he came back from the North Caucasus in 1930 he moved with his family to an apartment in the Kremlin's Kavalerskii korpus; Mikhail Kalinin, his closest friend, lived next door.<sup>44</sup> Dora Khazan, like Nadezhda Allilueva, Stalin's wife, attended the Moscow Industrial Academy (*Promakademiia*). Like Molotov's wife, she held important posts, from director of a textile factory to deputy commissar for light industry (from early 1938). Unlike Polina Molotov or the Estonian Ekaterina Kalinin, Dora Khazan avoided arrest.<sup>45</sup> Andreev's daughter appears to have married a relative of Kuibyshev.<sup>46</sup> Andreev himself was a leader very much in the Stalin mould in terms of dress and approach. He wore the simple peasant blouse, the *kosovorotka*, in his case no affectation. Contemporaries described his simplicity and approachability, but also noted his 'external severity'. Andreev had, however, developed a love of literature and classical music. He had simple tastes and was apparently a teetotaller. When the Soviet leaders moved out of the Kremlin in the 1950s the furniture the Andreevs took to their new flat was what they had originally been issued with in the Kremlin when they first moved in.

Krestinskii and Andreev, from the revolutionary elite, can be compared and contrasted with two 'new entrants'. Iosif Vareikis and Panas Liubchenko were in many respects more typical of the Central Committee membership in the 1920s and 1930s. Neither Vareikis nor Liubchenko had held Central Committee status in the 'Leninist' period; both were apparently loyal 'Stalinists'—and victims of Stalin's Terror.<sup>47</sup> Vareikis served on the Central Committee throughout the early

<sup>43</sup> 'Delo Beriia: Plenum TsK KPSS—2–7 iulia 1953 g. Stenograficheskii otchet', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 2, pp. 182–6.

<sup>44</sup> Bazhanov, Stalin's erstwhile secretary, reported that Tamara Khazanova, a young woman who had once been a member of his (Bazhanov's) staff, seduced Andreev; she also supposedly had an affair with Stalin; see Boris Bazhanov, *Vospominaniia byvshevo sekretaria Stalina* (n.p.: Tret'ia volna, 1980), 52. There are a number of confusing aspects to this episode, and as Bazhanov apparently sets the event after his own defection the account is less reliable than other parts of his memoirs. Bazhanov may simply have confused two surnames, Khazan and Khazanova.

<sup>45</sup> Ekaterina Kalinin was arrested in 1938, Polina Zhemchuzhina a decade later. See L. Vasil'eva, *Kremlevskie zheny* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1993), 281–301, 314–50.

<sup>46</sup> Natal'ia Andreevna is silent about this marriage in her own account of her father, and in it used the surname Andreeva, but her own son was named Andrei Kuibyshev; see V. D. Uspenskii, *Shkoly budushchego: Povest' ob Andree Andreeve* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988), 379. Perhaps this was an unsuccessful marriage.

<sup>47</sup> There is an extensive and informative Brezhnev-era biography of Vareikis in D. D. Lappo, *Boitsy Leninskoi zakalki* (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1972). Although hardly objective it gives a good outline of his career and includes useful material from the provincial press. See also Lappo's 'Vernyi syn partii: K 70-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia I. M. Vareikisa', *Pravda*, 18 Sept. 1964, p. 4, and his 'Stoikii leninets', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1963, no. 11, pp. 100–5. On Liubchenko there is a short but revealing treatment in P. P. Bachinskii and D. V. Tabachnik, 'Afanasii Petrovich Liubchenko', *Voprosy istorii*, 1990, no. 12, pp. 60–75, and R. Ia. Pirog, 'Kak pogib predsedeatel' sov'narkoma Ukrain-skoi SSR P. P. Liubchenko', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 10, pp. 140–1. See also M. N. Sapun, 'Kto i kogda vosglavliai pravitel'stvo Sovetskoi Ukrainy', *Kommunist Ukrainy*, 1990, no. 5, pp. 65 ff.

Stalin period. He was a candidate member from 1924, and attained full member status in 1930, as an apparently arch-loyal implementer of Stalin's programmes. Liubchenko, in contrast, only reached the Central Committee as a candidate member at the 'Congress of the Victors' in 1934. The two men, members of our first generation, matched the age profile of most of the Central Committee. Vareikis was born in 1894 (a year before Andreev) and Liubchenko in 1897.

Vareikis was a Civil War hero from a relatively humble Lithuanian working-class background. In the 1920s and 1930s he was a typical party generalist, holding important posts both in the Moscow apparatus and in regional party organs. An active participant in the rise of the Secretariat, the young Lithuanian became secretary of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party in the spring of 1924—at age 30—and from there he was elected to the all-union Central Committee at the 13th Party Congress in May. From October 1924 to January 1926 he was brought back into Stalin's Moscow apparat, as head of the Central Committee's Press/Literature Department. According to Bazhanov (Stalin's private secretary), Stalin appointed Vareikis precisely because Zinoviev disliked him, finding him an insensitive 'apparatchik'. In any event, Vareikis took an active part in the politicization of literature and in the opposition's defeat; one of his books was *Is Socialism In One Country Possible?* (1925).<sup>48</sup> Altogether he wrote seventy books and pamphlets and 100 articles. After the Press/Literature Department Vareikis moved to be secretary of the important Saratov province, and then in 1928 of the new Central Black-Earth super-region, made up of four old provinces. These posts kept him on the Central Committee, and from 1930 he was a full member. Vareikis and Andreev each controlled crucial regions during the collectivization drive. Unlike Andreev, Vareikis stayed on as first secretary of Voronezh region after the Central Black-Earth region was divided up in June 1934. In the spring of 1935 he moved to be first secretary of Stalingrad region, and then in December 1936 to the Far Eastern region, centred on Khabarovsk and facing an expansionist Japan in Manchuria. Vareikis was, then, a powerful middle-level official, apparently entrusted by Stalin with a range of responsible tasks in the struggle with the opposition, in collectivization, and in internal preparations for national defence.

Liubchenko, like Vareikis, was a non-Russian, at a time when the Great Russian domination of the Central Committee had yet to be established. Like Vareikis, Liubchenko was a revolutionary veteran of the Civil War years, but he was a representative of a different sub-group, the leaders of the Ukrainian SSR and the Communist Party of the Ukraine (*KP(b)U*). It was in the Ukraine that he held all his important postings. His first major post in the Soviet structure was as chairman of the Administration of Agricultural Co-operatives in the Ukraine (October 1922 to late 1925), and then in December 1925 he became—at age 28—soviet

<sup>48</sup> Bazhanov, *Vospominaniia*, 229 ff.



2.1 Iosif Vareikis (from *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 12, 1989)

chairman of Kiev region and of Kiev city. This was in the period when Stalin had asserted control over the Ukrainian SSR by making his close lieutenant Kaganovich first secretary; under Kaganovich, Liubchenko was in 1927 advanced to be KP(b)U Central Committee Secretary in charge of ideology. In this post he helped carry out the first stage of industrialization and collectivization, and he was there, too, during the terrible man-made famine of the winter of 1932–3. At the height of this famine he was made deputy prime minister (under V. Ia. Chubar'). He helped hound the 'national-deviationist' Skrypnik to suicide in 1933, and at the all-union 17th Congress seven months later he participated actively in the verbal harassment of former oppositionists. At this Congress he became a candidate member of the all-union Central Committee. Although the post of union-republic deputy prime minister did not normally carry Central Committee status, Liubchenko's election presumably anticipated his promotion to prime minister of the Ukrainian SSR, which was to take place in April 1934 (when Chubar' moved to Moscow as all-union deputy prime minister).

Both Vareikis and Liubchenko came from relatively humble origins, and their backgrounds had much in common with many of the others who came onto the

Central Committee in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Iosif Vareikis was born in a small town in Kovno province; his father, a Lithuanian peasant who spoke Russian badly, had migrated to work as a stoker in the new American-owned Singer sewing-machine factory at Podol'sk, outside Moscow. Iosif was given some education, attending a trade school (*remeslennoe uchilishche*) before beginning work as a metal worker (*tokar'*) at Singers; his education was supplemented by workers' self-education circles and the reading of Maxim Gorky. The 19-year-old metalworker evidently joined the Bolsheviks in 1913, but—unlike Andreev, whose age and background were not dissimilar—he remained a rank-and-file member and he was not an 'illegal'. He was still at Singers in February 1917, where he was elected to the Podol'sk Soviet of Workers Deputies.<sup>49</sup> Liubchenko was also of peasant origin; he was born, three years after Vareikis, to a Ukrainian peasant family in a village in Kiev province. Unlike Vareikis—and Andreev—he received a good education. Because his father was a veteran of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8 he received—at age 12—a grant to attend the Kiev School for Military Medical Orderlies. Like so many other teenage pupils Panas Liubchenko was attracted to the revolutionary movement, in this case the peasant-centred Socialist-Revolutionaries, but the war began before he could become involved in any serious political activity. He served as a medical orderly and was twice wounded—he limped to the end of his life—and then worked in a Kiev hospital. At the start of 1917 he passed the entrance examinations for Kiev University, but then the Revolution intervened. Vareikis's public political life began with the Podol'sk soviet; Liubchenko was elected to the much more important Kiev soviet, and then to its executive committee. He was elected as a Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary to the Central Rada (the Ukrainian 'soviet'), but split with it and was imprisoned. He was saved by the arrival of Red detachments from Russia in January 1918.

Vareikis's extraordinary career took off when he left the backwater of Podol'sk. In August 1917 the young Lithuanian went to Ekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) in the Ukraine, evidently at the behest of the party's Moscow region committee, to agitate among factory-workers. He took part in the seizure of 'soviet' power in Ekaterinoslav—in a rank-and-file position. His first party post came in early January 1918 when he was made party secretary and then a 'people's commissar' in the ephemeral Donetsk–Krivoi Rog 'Republic', centred on Kharkov. When the Germans overran Kharkov, Vareikis moved in May 1918 to Simbirsk—Lenin's native town, deep in the middle Volga region—and to his moment in history. He was chairman of the party provincial committee when, in July 1918, Murav'ev, the Red Army C.-in-C. on the Eastern Front, went over to the anti-Bolsheviks. This was an act which threatened to bring about the collapse of the whole Red position in the East. Vareikis and some comrades ambushed and killed

<sup>49</sup> Molotov's suggestion that Vareikis worked for the Tsarist secret police, and that there was documentary proof of this, seems unlikely in view of Vareikis's very junior position in the party (Chuev, *Sto sorok besed*, 408 f.).

Murav'ev and regained control of the town.<sup>50</sup> When the situation on the Volga stabilized in the autumn of the 1918 Vareikis remained as local party chief in Simbirsk, until 1920.

In August 1920, during the crisis of the Soviet–Polish War, Vareikis was moved to Vitebsk in western Russia as chairman of the provincial ‘revolutionary committee’ (*revkom*). At the end of 1921 he was moved to yet another part of the country as a member of the Central Committee Bureau for the Transcaucasus, of the Transcaucasus regional party committee, and of the Baku town party committee; in Baku he was deputy chairman of the local soviet (under Kirov), helping to rebuild the oil industry. He also found time for marriage, to a young organizer (*instruktor*) from the town committee. In August 1923 came another transfer, this time to be chairman of the Kiev provincial committee in the Ukraine, where he was clearly acting as Stalin's ally.<sup>51</sup> From there followed in May 1924 his move to Turkestan as secretary—and his membership in the (all-union) Central Committee.

Liubchenko's early career was less spectacular than that of Vareikis, and more focused in one geographical area. He became a leader of the Ukrainian Left Socialist Revolutionaries, the agrarian party which evolved into the so-called ‘Borot'bists’. The latter were largely an instrument of the Communists, and Liubchenko was an adherent of the self-liquidation of the Borot'bists and creation of the Ukrainian Communist Party—KP(b)U—in early 1920. He worked underground in Kiev against the Ukrainian nationalists and the Russian Whites, and between occupations served on the local revolutionary tribunal. At the end of 1920 he served as deputy commissar of the 2nd Cavalry Army in the battles against the White general Wrangel in the Crimea. With the end of the Civil War he became chairman of the Chernigov provincial soviet executive committee (*gubispolkom*), with the task of putting down the guerrilla bands; after that he moved on to be deputy chairman in the Donbass soviet executive committee.

All four men were of our first generation—they were born before 1901—and the three who still served on the Central Committee in 1934, including Andreev, were very nearly the same age; none had reached 40 before the 1934 congress. Krestinskii was from a higher social and education background, and Molotov was perhaps not alone in seeing him as a *barin* (gentleman).<sup>52</sup> The others had more humble roots, and a much more limited education. Their ethnic diversity—a Russian, a Lithuanian, and a Ukrainian—was typical of the diversity of the elite in the first two decades after the revolution (Krestinskii was also a Ukrainian). The three had been active in radical politics before 1917, but none had been important in Lenin's tiny pre-war Bolshevik Party. Indeed, Vareikis, and Liubchenko had not

<sup>50</sup> On this episode see I. Vareikis, ‘Ubiistvo Murav'eva’, in B. Afanas'ev *et al.*, *1918 god na rodine Lenina* (Kuibyshev: Kuibyshevskoe izdatel'stvo, 1936), 163–9.

<sup>51</sup> See Vareikis's letter to Stalin on the struggle with Trotsky's supporters in Kiev (‘Vnutripartiinye diskussii 20-kh godov’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 3, p. 201–2).

<sup>52</sup> Chuev, *Sto sorok besed*, 199.





2.2 Panas Liubchenko (from *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 10, 1990)

even been ‘committeemen’. None played an important part in 1917. Andreev, Vareikis, and Liubchenko were, however, men of action, rank-and-file ‘revolutionaries’ before February 1917. They were thrown into leading roles in the Civil War and were successful there in consolidating Communist power. All were active participants of the new ‘secretarial’ Stalinist party of the 1920s, and evidently exponents of the transformation of the country at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. They were party generalists acting in a range of state, party, and economic capacities.

### The Central Committee Devours Itself

The actual political function of the Central Committee was much less than either its ‘legal’ position in the party rules or the individual powers of the high elite who were its members would have suggested. In 1931, however, the Soviet dictator made a spirited defence of broadly based collective leadership:<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Stalin, *Sochineniia*, xiii. 107 f.

In our leading body, the Central Committee of our Party, which directs all our Soviet and Party organizations, there are about 70 members. In this areopagus is concentrated the wisdom of our Party. Each has an opportunity or correcting anyone's individual opinion or proposal. Each has an opportunity of contributing his experience. If this were not the case, if decisions were taken by individual persons, there would be very serious mistakes in our work. But since each has an opportunity of correcting the mistakes of individual persons, and since we pay heed to such corrections, we arrive at decisions that are more or less correct.

The 1925 party rules restated the extensive powers of the Central Committee to organize the work of the party and the state, and indeed the relevant article was prefaced with a new comprehensive statement that, '[i]n the intervals between congresses the Central Committee organizes, guides, and directs all the work of the party'. It was also the case that the state organization that had been Lenin's 'government', Sovnarkom (the council of ministers), was now secondary to party bodies. On the other hand, real power lay not so much in the Central Committee as in its various subcommittees, notably the Politburo and Orgburo, and in its secretarial apparatus, personified by the general secretary of the Central Committee (Stalin, appointed in 1922). This course of events bore out to some extent Trotsky's famous prediction of 1904: 'Lenin's methods lead to this: the party organization at first substitutes itself for the party as a whole; then the Central Committee substitutes itself for the organization; and finally a single "dictator" substitutes himself for the Central Committee . . .' M. N. Riutin made the same point in his famous 1932 anti-Stalinist 'Platform': 'The Politburo and the CC . . . have been transformed from authoritative party organs to Stalin's advisory organs, humiliated by Stalin no less cynically than the Tsar humiliated the State Duma.'<sup>54</sup>

This is not to say that there were not important plenums: the October 1923 plenum that criticized Trotsky and the early Opposition; the May 1924 plenum to which Lenin's Testament was read; the July and October 1926 plenums which removed Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Kamenev from the Politburo; the October and November 1927 plenums which expelled Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee and the party; the November 1928 plenum which accepted a rapid pace of industrialization under the 1st Five-Year Plan; the November 1929 plenum which supported forced collectivization and the removal of Bukharin from the Politburo; and the February–March 1937 plenum which set the scene for the Purges. But these were meetings in which the Central Committee was guided by the top party leadership.

<sup>54</sup> L. D. Trotskii, *Nashi politicheskie zadachi* (Geneva: n.p., 1904), 54; 'Platforma "Soiuz marksistov-lenintsev" ("Gruppa Riutina")', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 12, pp. 181 f. It would probably be more correct to talk about the Politburo rather than the Central Committee as a fulfilment of Trotsky's prophecy. It was a body closer in size to the Central Committee of 1904 than the 100-member CCs of the 1920s and 1930s.

The fullest recent discussion of the Central Committee plenum as part of the political structure of the 1920s and 1930s has rightly stressed its failure to develop as an institution.<sup>55</sup> Frequency of meetings has been one widely used indicator of Central Committee activity and power. The Central Committee met as a body less often from the mid-1920s, and the changing party rules reflected this. The number of plenary meetings was kept at no less than one every two months in the 1925 rules, although in the 1934 version the frequency was reduced to one every four months. The notion of a two- or three-day 'plenum' developed during the winter of 1926–7. A meeting spread over three days between 13 and 16 April 1927 counted as only one plenum (plenum no. 14), while the meetings that occurred in the previous year between 14 and 23 July were each officially counted as a plenum (plenum nos. 3–7).

The Central Committee met much more frequently in Stalin's first decade of full power (after *c.* 1929) than it would in his second. As Table 2.7 shows, there were two to four plenums a year up to 1938. There appear to have been only eleven plenums between the 18th Congress in March 1939 and Stalin's death in 1953, and none at all in 1942–3, 1945, 1948, and 1950–1. It is true that Central Committee members also had the right to attend Politburo meetings, and attendance lists show that the attendance of about twenty-five full members and twenty candidates was quite common, but even this practice became less frequent in the later 1930s.<sup>56</sup> The Central Committee had never taken off as a self-standing institution, and its role was progressively reduced. There was only one actual plenum in 1938, although the party records listed as plenums correspondence ballots of 17–20 February 1938 and 28 February–2 March 1938, along with a further ballot circulated on 9–11 January 1939 which requested the calling of a congress for 10 March 1939.<sup>57</sup> These were pseudo-plenums, in which a correspondence ballot was counted as a plenum in order to stay within the formal limits of the party rules. But if the powers of the Central Committee as a collective were curtailed during these years, something much worse was to happen to the elite who constituted its membership.

At the 20th Party Congress Khrushchev made his famous 'Secret Speech' (25 February 1956) denouncing Stalin. One of the most striking moments was his 'revelation' about the fate of the Central Committee elected at the 17th Congress in 1934, the so-called 'Congress of the Victors'. The secret transcript revealed the shock of a later generation of congress delegates:<sup>58</sup> 'It has been established that of

<sup>55</sup> Graeme Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 144–52, 225–30, 278–85.

<sup>56</sup> Khlevniuk, *Stalinskoe Politburo*, 180–255.

<sup>57</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 640*.

<sup>58</sup> N. S. Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti. Doklad Pervogo sekretaria TsK KPSS N. S. Khrushcheva XX s"ezdu KPSS 25 fevralia 1956 g.', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 3, p. 137.

**Table 2.7.** CC activity, 1923–1939

Year	Plenums	Meetings	Year	Plenums	Meetings
1923	18	7	1932	2	2
1924	20	9	1933	1	1
1925	4	3	1934	3	3
1926	5	5	1935	4	4
1927	5	5	1936	4	4
1928	3	3	1937	3	3
1929	4	4	1938	1	1
1930	3	3	1939	3	3
1931	2	2			

*Note:* The ‘Plenums’ columns give the official number of plenums. The ‘Meetings’ column is an attempt to standardize the terminology. Gatherings of the CC, whether described as *zasedaniia* or *plenums*, that were held within three days of one another are treated as one ‘meeting’. From c.1926 the term ‘plenum’ officially began to be used in the classic sense, i.e. referring to a series of sessions held over consecutive days.

the 139 members and candidate members of the party’s Central Committee who were elected at the party’s 17th Congress, 98 were arrested and shot (mainly in 1937–1938), that is, 70 percent. (Noise of indignation in the hall).’

Khrushchev noted that of full delegates at the February 1934 congress 80 per cent had been party members of pre-1921 vintage and 60 per cent ‘workers’. It was, therefore, ‘absolutely unthinkable that such a congress could have elected a Central Committee in which the majority were enemies of the party’.

Why were so many of the elite killed? How did they allow the blood purge to happen to themselves? Part of the explanation lies in the gradual build-up of precedents. The removal of serving Central Committee members was not new, indeed, it had been the climax of the struggle with the Left Opposition in 1926. In December 1930 V. V. Lominadze and S. I. Syrtsov were expelled from the Central Committee ‘for factional activity’.<sup>59</sup> Both Lominadze and Syrtsov were given responsible administrative jobs later on, although not at Central Committee level. More ominous was the method of their removal, by ‘correspondence ballot’ of Central Committee members—*oprosom*. The oppositionists removed in the 1920s from either the Central Committee or the Politburo had been removed—in accordance with the party rules—at an actual plenum of the Central Committee. In December 1930 the leadership did not wait for the next Central Committee plenum, which was held only three weeks later. This was the way the purges of the Central Committee would be implemented eight years later.

A distinct issue was the ‘criminalization’—and corresponding punishment—of elite opposition. This dated back to Trotsky’s exile to Central Asia in 1928 and his

<sup>59</sup> For details see R. W. Davies, ‘The Syrtsov–Lominadze Affair’, *Soviet Studies*, 33: 1 (1981), 29–50.

expulsion from the USSR in February 1929; the latter decision was made by the Politburo rather than the Central Committee. A second important episode involved the so-called ‘Riutin group’, who had dared to circulate an anti-leadership platform. They were expelled from the party by the September–October 1932 plenum of the Central Committee, meeting jointly with the party’s Central Control Commission. M. N. Riutin, the supposed leader of a ‘white guard counter-revolutionary group’, was an Old Bolshevik, a former secretary of Moscow’s ‘proletarian’ Krasnaia Presnia borough (1924–8), and a Central Committee candidate member in 1927–30; the OGPU (secret police) Collegium subsequently sentenced Riutin to ten years in prison. At the same time former Central Committee members Zinoviev and Kamenev were exiled to Siberia, effectively for reading and not reporting the ‘Riutin Platform’. For related reasons, former Central Committee members E. A. Preobrazhenskii and I. N. Smirnov were arrested by the OGPU and exiled in January 1933.<sup>60</sup>

In one remarkable sense action against Central Committee members did not come out of the blue in 1936–7. The revised version of the rules approved at the 17th Party Congress, eleven months before Kirov’s assassination, was the first to be explicit about the Central Committee’s right to punish party members who were undisciplined or who had joined factions. In the case of Central Committee full members they could be demoted to candidate member status or even expelled from the party. This had been provided for under the infamous Article 7 of the secret 1921 resolution ‘On the Unity of the Party’,<sup>61</sup> but it had not appeared in the 1922 or 1925 versions of the rules.

The situation became more dramatic following the assassination of Politburo member Kirov in Leningrad in December 1934. The secret trial of the ‘Moscow Centre’ in January 1935—not to be confused with the 1936 ‘Show Trial’—cast a darker shadow over the elite. Former members of the elite, rather than simply being vilified and expelled, were now put on trial and condemned to long terms in prison. Among the nineteen tried for complicity in Kirov’s assassination were four former Central Committee members—Zinoviev, Kamenev, G. E. Evdokimov, and A. S. Kuklin.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, in the trial of the ‘Leningrad Counter-Revolutionary Zinovievite Group’, former Central Committee members G. I. Safarov and P. A. Zalutskii were condemned.<sup>63</sup> Eighteen months later—in August 1936—came something totally unprecedented in the history of the Communist

<sup>60</sup> ‘O dele tak nazyvaemogo “Soiuz Marksistov-Lenintsev”’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 6, pp. 103–15; ‘O tak nazyvaemoi “kontrevoliutsionnoi trotskistskoi gruppe Smirnova I. N., Ter-Vaganiana V. A., Preobrazhenskogo E. A. i drugikh”’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 6, pp. 71–89.

<sup>61</sup> *Desiatyi s’ezd RKP(b), mart 1921 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), 573.

<sup>62</sup> ‘O dele tak nazyvaemogo “Moskovskogo tsentra”’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 7, pp. 64–85.

<sup>63</sup> ‘O dele tak nazyvaemoi “Leningradskoi kontrevoliutsionnoi zinov’evskoi gruppy Safarova, Zalutskogo i drugikh”’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 1, pp. 38–58. Safarov was sentenced—initially—to two years in exile, Zalutskii to five years in concentration camp.

**Table 2.8.** Dynamics of the CC purge, 1935–1939

Plenum	Members	Expelled	Other	Survivors
1935	137	1	2	134
1936–Feb. 1937	134	2	2	130
Feb.–Mar. 1937 Plenum	130	2	—	128
Mar.–May 1937 ( <i>oprosom</i> )	128	8	1	119
June 1937 Plenum	119	31	—	88
(June–Oct. 1937)	88	—	2	86
Oct. 1937 Plenum	86	23	—	63
Dec. 1937/Jan. 1938 Plenum	63	10	—	53
Feb. 1938 ( <i>oprosom</i> )	53	2	—	51
Feb. 1938–Mar. 1939	51	18	1	32

*Note:* As elected in February 1934 the CC consisted of 139 full and candidate members; two died in 1934. The ‘member’ column gives the number at the *start* of the given plenum or time period. The ‘expelled’ column gives those formally expelled from the CC at the plenum or by a particular series of ‘correspondence ballots’ (*oprosom*). The ‘other’ column gives those whom death had removed from the CC, through natural causes or suicide.

elite—the *execution* of four former Central Committee members—Zinoviev, Kamenev, G. E. Evdokimov, and I. N. Smirnov—following the trial of the ‘United Trotskyist-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre’.

So far only the ‘losers’ from the 1920s had been affected, defeated oppositionists and *former* Central Committee members. Gradually, however, the personnel of the current (1934) Central Committee ‘of the Victors’ were drawn in. The June 1935 plenum removed A. S. Enukidze from the Central Committee, ostensibly for lax security in the Kremlin.<sup>64</sup> A few prominent *current* Central Committee members began to be removed by correspondence ballot at about the time of the final Zinoviev–Kamenev trial: Sokol’nikov in July 1936 and Piatakov in September 1936 (both confirmed by the secret December 1936 plenum). (For an outline of these and later changes see Table 2.8.) These were all oppositionists who had recanted and supposedly been welcomed back into the fold. Tomskii, another veteran, committed suicide in August 1936. On 23–30 January 1937 the trial of the ‘Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Centre’ condemned Piatakov and Sokol’nikov.<sup>65</sup> Another Central Committee member, Ordzhonikidze, committed suicide on 18 February 1937.

<sup>64</sup> ‘O dele . . . “Moskovskogo tsentra”’, 86. Enukidze was shot in October 1937; see N. Mikhailov *et al.*, ‘O sud’be chlenov i kandidatov v chleny TsK VKP(b), izbrannogo XVII s’ezdom partii’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 12, p. 90.

<sup>65</sup> ‘O tak nazyvaemom “parallel’nom antisovetskom trotskistskom tsentre”’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 9, pp. 30–50.

Despite these changes, the Central Committee elected at the 1934 Congress of the Victors was essentially intact at the start of 1937. By the time the February–March 1937 Plenum opened on the 23 February the Central Committee evidently still consisted of sixty-six full members (out of the original seventy-one) and sixty-four candidates (out of sixty-eight).<sup>66</sup> The three most important items on the agenda were the fate of Bukharin and Rykov, the lessons of ‘sabotage’ in the economic commissariats (supposedly brought out by the two show trials), and shortcomings of party work in uncovering Trotskyists and other ‘two-facers’.<sup>67</sup> A related resolution of the plenum, ‘The Lessons of Wrecking, Sabotage, and Espionage by Japanese-German-Trotskyist Agents’, was passed. But although Bukharin and Rykov were expelled from the CC and thrown to the wolves, the bulk of the membership was still not affected.

The Purges began to accelerate later that spring. The first stage involved more correspondence ballots of the Central Committee. At the end of March 1937 Stalin sent a circular requesting that G. G. Iagoda, the former head of the secret police, be removed from the Central Committee—and his arrest sanctioned—for anti-state and criminal offences. A series of further circulars in the second half of May coincided with the arrest of the Red Army leaders. These circulars concerned I. D. Kabakov, Sh. Z. Eliava, K. V. Ukhanov, Politburo member Ia. E. Rudzutak, and the army leaders Tukhachevskii, Iakir, and Uborevich. In each case all members of the Central Committee were sent a secret circular from the centre, usually from Stalin, requesting the expulsion of one or more Central Committee members on particular grounds. All the ballot documents, signed and returned to the centre by the addressees, are in the former party archive, and there is no sign of any member or candidate opposing these proposals.<sup>68</sup> Strictly speaking this was illegal. According to the 1934 rules the application of such extreme measures to CC full and candidate members of the Central Committee could only be carried out through a plenum of the CC to which all members of the Commission of Party Control were invited; a two-thirds vote was required.

Another turning-point, more important as far as the mass of the ‘loyal Stalinists’ on the Central Committee was concerned, was the June plenum of 1937. This

<sup>66</sup> Kirov and Kuibyshev died in 1934 and 1935 respectively. The removal of Enukidze and Piatakov, and the death of Ordzhonikidze, were the other changes among full members. Among candidates A. M. Shteingart, first secretary of Saratov region party committee, died of natural causes immediately after the 17th Congress, and I. P. Tovstukha died in 1935. Tomsii and Sokol’nikov were the two other candidates who were no longer on the CC.

<sup>67</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis’ 2, delo 613*.

<sup>68</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis’ 2, delo 614*. In the first case, for Iagoda, only *full* members were contacted; later *oprosy* also involved candidate members. The text of one of the circulars has been published in Khlevniuk, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro*, 156f. The army leaders were tried and shot in June (three of them were on the CC: Iakir was a full member, Tukhachevskii and Uborevich candidates). Gamarnik, the chief commissar of the Red Army and a CC full member, had killed himself.

took place on 23–9 June, two weeks after the army trial; the strength of the CC was now sixty full members and fifty-nine candidate members. Nearly all eligible Central Committee members were present: exceptions were V. K. Bliukher and T. D. Deribas in the Far East, and G. I. Petrovskii from the Ukraine. The plenum voted to expel, in all, an additional quarter of its own number: fourteen full and seventeen candidate members. The process at the June plenum was not straightforward. On 23 June three members and four candidates were expelled after the plenum expressed a 'lack of political confidence in them', while a further nineteen were expelled in line with a Politburo resolution branding them traitors and active counter-revolutionaries.<sup>69</sup> On 26 June the Central Committee voted to expel candidate G. N. Kaminskii, and on the last day of the plenum two further members and two further candidates were expelled. Whether the NKVD was simply developing its cases or whether the individuals expelled had, during the plenum, expressed reservations about the purge of their comrades is not known. Kaminskii, at least, had apparently accused Beria at the plenum of once working for the Georgian nationalist underground.<sup>70</sup> In any event, there was certainly a sense of improvisation.<sup>71</sup>

Improvisation was also reflected by the lack of any clear pattern for these first 'mass' expulsions. Of the thirty-one members and candidates removed at the June plenum, fifteen had led central state institutions (mostly peoples, commissariats), four had been party or state leaders at union-republic level, and six were regional party leaders (obkom first secretaries); the other six held miscellaneous posts. In some cases these were 'dead souls', people who had been removed from important—Central Committee level—posts in the previous years; for example, V. V. Osinskii had left Gosplan in August 1935 and M. S. Chudov had ceased to be second secretary of the Leningrad region party committee in June 1936. Some had

<sup>69</sup> Details of the June 1937 plenum are in RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 614*. Those expelled due to the plenum's 'lack of confidence' in them were full members P. A. Alekseev, I. E. Liubimov, and D. E. Sulimov, and candidates V. I. Kuritsyn, G. M. Musabekov, V. V. Osinskii, and A. I. Sedel'nikov. The 19 expelled as counter-revolutionaries were full members N. K. Antipov, V. A. Balitskii, V. G. Knorin, L. I. Lavrent'ev, S. S. Lobov, M. O. Razumov, I. P. Rumiantsev, B. P. Sheboldaev, I. P. Zhukov, and candidates G. I. Blagonravov, N. M. Goloded, M. I. Kalmanovich, N. P. Komarov, N. A. Kubiak, V. M. Mikhailov, V. I. Polonskii, N. N. Popov, I. S. Unshlikht, and E. I. Veger.

<sup>70</sup> Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti', 155. It is not clear whether Khrushchev's account was based on documentary evidence or on his personal recollection of the plenum. Oleg Khlevniuk has recently questioned the suggestion by another Russian historian that Kaminskii criticized the Purge (Boris Starkov, 'Narkom Ezhov', in Getty and Manning, *Stalinist Terror*, 36; Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy*, 237). Expelled with Kaminskii were full members M. S. Chudov and I. F. Kodatskii and candidates I. P. Pavlunovskii and P. I. Struppe.

<sup>71</sup> The mimeographed attendance checklists prepared for the June 1937 plenum are another clue. The names of all but one of the 19 'counter-revolutionaries' had been left off the list (the exception was E. I. Veger), i.e. they had effectively been dealt with before the plenum papers were prepared. The names of the others (including Veger) were actually typed in the checklist, but had been crossed off, indicating a last-minute decision (RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 614*, p. 163).



been removed from their posts during the spring or early summer of 1937 (M. I. Kalmanovich, for example, in April 1937). Arrests seem more often to have followed rather than preceded expulsion from the Central Committee, although some were arrested before (e.g. I. S. Unshlikht on 11 June, N. A. Kubiak on 13 June, and I. P. Rumiantsev on 17 June), and some were evidently arrested during the plenum (e.g. P. I. Struppe and D. E. Sulimov, on 27 June).

The October 1937 plenum met in an even more strained atmosphere. One full member (I. Kosior) had died of natural causes in July 1937, and Panas Liubchenko a candidate member at this time, had apparently committed suicide—after shooting his wife—in August.<sup>72</sup> This left a nominal forty-five full members and forty-one candidates when the next plenum met on 11–12 October 1937. The Politburo put forward a list of twenty-four members (including, oddly, the already-dead Liubchenko) whom it proposed expelling as ‘enemies of the people’.<sup>73</sup> The pattern was no clearer than it had been at the time of the June plenum. Some had been removed from their posts earlier (I. P. Nosov, for example, in August 1937); some had been arrested earlier (like I. A. Zelenskii in August). In any event, at the end of the October 1937 plenum the ‘supreme organ’ of the party had now been reduced to thirty-seven of the original full members and twenty-six of the original candidates.

The Purges offered opportunities for promotion as well as disgrace. The October 1937 plenum elected N. I. Ezhov, head of the NKVD, a candidate member of the Politburo. What has not been made clear in earlier accounts was that the October 1937 plenum was also the occasion for promotions within the Central Committee.<sup>74</sup> Some fourteen candidate members were promoted to full-member status. At the plenum Stalin opposed further promotions, on the grounds that it would have left the Central Committee without a reserve. Some of those promoted would be Stalinist ‘survivors’: M. D. Bagirov, N. A. Bulganin, S. A. Lozovskii, L. Z. Mekhlis (and the less well-known I. G. Makarov, a steel official from the Commissariat of Heavy Industry). The majority, nine out of fourteen, however, were promoted only to be purged later in the year, or in 1938: V. K. Bliukher, A. S. Bulin, U. D. Isaev, M. M. Kul’kov, M. E. Mikhailov, N. I. Pakhomov, E. K. Pramnek, P. I. Smorodin, and A. I. Ugarov. This was another indication of the ad hoc nature of the Purge.

<sup>72</sup> Kosior apparently died ‘in a sanatorium near Moscow’ (Mikhailov, ‘O sud’be’, 92).

<sup>73</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis’ 2, delo 624*. Those expelled included eight full members, A. Ikramov, M. M. Khataevich, A. I. Krinitskii, D. Z. Lebed’, I. P. Nosov, I. A. Piatnitskii, I. M. Vareikis, I. A. Zelenskii, and sixteen candidate members, Ia. B. Bykin, N. N. Demchenko, T. D. Deribas, I. G. Eremin, N. F. Gikalo, F. P. Griadnitskii, G. F. Grin’ko, A. S. Kalygina, A. K. Lepa, P. P. Liubchenko, V. V. Ptukha, A. P. Rozengol’ts, S. A. Sarkisov, B. A. Semenov, A. P. Serebrovskii, and V. P. Shubrikov. As already mentioned, at least one of these was already dead (Liubchenko).

<sup>74</sup> These promotions was not mentioned in the major work on the 1934 CC, Mikhailov, ‘O sud’be’. According to Stalin it was those people who had got most votes in 1934 who were selected. Khrushchev proposed in addition the ‘proven hard workers’ L. Z. Mekhlis, M. E. Mikhailov, E. K. Pramnek, and A. I. Ugarov (RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis’ 2, delo 629*, p. 93).

The last semi-formal 'cull' seems to have been carried out by correspondence ballot in early December 1937, when ten full members were removed, including two who had been promoted from candidate to full member only two months before; most were accused of having been German spies.<sup>75</sup> This was a quarter of existing full members. Again, none of the members who were circulated opposed the removals and arrests. The removals were confirmed by the next plenum, which met on four days between 11 and 20 January 1938; it was to be the last Central Committee meeting for over a year. Some forty surviving members and nine candidates were present. Ironically, the plenum accepted a resolution proposed by Malenkov, 'On Mistakes in Excluding Communists from the Party'. At this plenum P. P. Postyshev was removed as a candidate member of the Politburo and was effectively replaced by Nikita Khrushchev, who joined the top elite for the first time. Again, some of the removed Central Committee members had been disgraced months previously. K. V. Ryndin, first secretary of Cheliabinsk region, had been arrested immediately after the October 1937 plenum. V. I. Mezhlauk and M. L. Rukhimovich had been replaced in important state economic posts (commissars for Machine-Building and the Defence Industry, respectively) in October 1937. M. A. Chernov had been replaced as commissar for Agriculture at the end of October 1937 (by R. I. Eikhe), and arrested the following month. Perhaps the most important figure was S. V. Kosior, first secretary in the Ukraine.

The last two correspondence ballots came shortly afterwards. The first involved Postyshev, who was now removed from the Central Committee and arrested. There was, as before, no opposition, and among those voting 'yes' were Marshals Egorov and Bliukher. Egorov was then subject to the last correspondence ballot in the plenum records, which took place on 28 February 1938.<sup>76</sup> Thereafter there were to be no more plenums, and even the formality of holding correspondence ballots was apparently abandoned. March 1938 saw the most famous of the 'Show Trials', that of the 'Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist Bloc', involving Bukharin, Rykov, and no fewer than nine other former Central Committee full and candidate members: M. A. Chernov, G. F. Grin'ko, G. G. Iagoda, A. I. Ikramov, V. I. Ivanov, N. N. Krestinskii, Kh. G. Rakovskii, A. P. Rozengol'ts, and I. A. Zelenskii.<sup>77</sup> All received immediate death sentences, aside from Rakovskii (who was shot at Orel Prison in September 1941). Meanwhile a further eighteen

<sup>75</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 630*. Those removed at the January 1938 plenum were full members K. Ia. Bauman, A. S. Bubnov, M. A. Chernov, Ia. A. Iakovlev, V. I. Ivanov, V. I. Mezhlauk, M. L. Rukhimovich, and K. V. Ryndin, as well as A. S. Bulin and M. E. Mikhailov, who had been promoted from candidate member in October 1937. Excerpts from this plenum were published in Khlevniuk, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro*, 157–9.

<sup>76</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 640*. Egorov was sacked as first deputy People's Commissar of Defence in February 1938.

<sup>77</sup> 'O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu tak nazyvaemogo "antisovetskogo pravotrotskistskogo bloka"', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 5, pp. 69–85. Some 10 other people were among the accused.

serving Central Committee members were removed at some point in 1938; details from that terrible year are not always clear.<sup>78</sup>

Krupskaia, Lenin's widow, died a natural death on 27 February 1939, so by the 18th Party Congress in March 1939 the Central Committee was reduced to thirty-two full and candidate members—from the original 139 elected in 1934 (Table 2.9). Of the others, ninety-four had been executed and three more were in prison; one had been assassinated, four had committed suicide, and five had died of natural causes.<sup>79</sup> The great majority of those removed from the Central Committee were dead by the time of the 18th Congress. About half apparently died in group executions on 12 June (three victims), 30 October 1937 (twelve), and 27 November 1937 (seven), 10 February 1938 (five), 15 March 1938 (eight), 29 July 1938 (nine), and 25–6 February 1939 (seven).<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* listing of the 1934 CC membership (Mikhailov, 'O sud'be') gives no formal date of expulsion from the CC for Bliukher, Chubar', Eikhe, Filatov, Isaev, Kosarev, Kul'kov, Mirzoiian, Pakhomov, Pozern, Pramnek, Smorodin, Stetskii, Strievskii, Ugarov, and Zatonskii. Filatov was replaced as mayor of Moscow (by Bulgannin) in August 1937, but evidently not removed from the CC at the October 1937 or January 1938 plenums; he was expelled from the party in February 1938.

<sup>79</sup> The figure of 32 Central Committee members—political survivors—on the eve of the 1939 party congress includes Ezhov and his deputy at Water Transport, E. G. Evdokimov (both men were executed in 1940). Ezhov appears to have remained in the CC until the 18th Congress, although he was demoted from the NKVD to the Commissariat of Water Transport; he may even have been a congress delegate (although he does not appear in the published delegate list). For the most recent discussion of Ezhov's fate see: Michael Parrish, *The Lesser Terror: Soviet State Security, 1939–1953* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), 6, 9.

The fate of the 139 full and candidate members of the 1934 Central Committee is now clear. One, Kirov, was assassinated, and before March 1939 five died natural deaths (including, it would seem, I. V. Kosior and Kuibyshev) and four committed suicide (Gamarnik, P. P. Liubchenko, Ordzhonikidze, and Toms'kii). Of the 129 survivors 32 remained on the committee and, according to the most authoritative source, 94 were executed in 1939 or earlier (Mikhailov, 'O sud'be', 87). The three people who were in prison in March 1939, and who would die there, were Chuvyrin, Eikhe, and Filatov. M. E. Chuvyrin was a veteran Russian worker-Bolshevik, and formerly a prominent trade-union and party official in the Ukraine. He had for unknown reasons been removed from his post as first secretary of Stalino region in May 1936, and it is not known where he served after that. He apparently avoided execution in 1937–9 but died in confinement in 1947: H. E. Schulz *et al.*, *Who Was Who in the USSR* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1972), 115; Chuvyrin is listed as 'repressed' in Mikhailov, 'O sud'be'. Eikhe, a member of the Politburo, was arrested in April 1938 and shot in February 1940. Filatov, mayor of Moscow, was expelled from the party in February 1938 and 'repressed', but his death date is given as 1941.

Khrushchev, in his Secret Speech, shocked the delegates to the 20th Congress by announcing that of the 1934 Central Committee '98 people were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937–8)': 'O kul'te lichnosti', 137. Mikhailov, 'O sud'be', includes a more accurate figure of 97 people who were 'illegally repressed'. Some 93 of these were recorded as shot in 1937–9; four after 1939. In fact *five* people are listed in the detailed biographies as having been 'repressed' after 1939: Chuvyrin, Eikhe, G. E. Evdokimov, Filatov, and Lozovskii (shot in 1952). One of these was presumably put by mistake in the group who died in 1937–9. In any event, a further four, secret policemen, were counted in Mikhailov, 'O sud'be', as executed for 'crimes against socialist legality' (Iagoda in 1937–9 and Bagirov, Beria, and Ezhov later). This gives a total of 101 executions among the 139 people elected in 1934.

<sup>80</sup> Mikhailov, 'O sud'be', 86. There were anomalies; Sokol'nikov, one of the first to be tried, and who had been sentenced to 'only' 10 years imprisonment, was supposedly killed by his cellmates on 21 May 1939 (p. 110). Radek (not a 1934 CC member) was also apparently killed in prison. Like Sokol'nikov, he had been publicly sentenced to 10 years.

**Table 2.9.** Political survivors of the 1934 CC

Full Members in 1934	
Andreev, A. A.*	Politburo member
Badaev, A. E.	Bolshevik veteran (joined 1904), Duma deputy (died 1951)
Beria, L. P.*	Minister, NKVD
Evdokimov, E. G.	Chekist, Ezhov's deputy at NKVT (died 1940).
Ezhov, N. I.	Politburo candidate (died 1940)
Kaganovich, L. M.*	Politburo member
Kaganovich, M. M.*	Industrial minister, brother of L. M.
Kalinin, M. I.*	Politburo member
Khrushchev, N. S.*	Politburo candidate
Krzhizhanovskii, G. M.	Bolshevik veteran (joined 1893) (died 1959)
Litvinov, M. M.*	Bolshevik veteran (1898), Foreign Minister
Manuil'skii, D. Z.*	Bolshevik veteran (1903), Sec., Comintern
Mikoian, A. I.*	Politburo candidate/member
Molotov, V. M.*	Politburo member
Nikolaeva, K. I.*	Soviet trade unionist, woman
Petrovskii, G. I.	Bolshevik veteran (1897); Politburo candidate (died 1958)
Shvernik, N. M.*	Orgburo member
Stalin, I. V.*	Politburo member
Voroshilov, K. E.*	Politburo member
Zhdanov, A. A.*	Politburo candidate
Candidate Members in 1934	
Bagirov, M. D.*	First secretary, Azerbaidzhan SSR; Beria associate.
Broido, G. I.	Director, publishing-house of CC (died 1956)
Budennyi, S. M.*	Civil War hero
Bulganin, N. A.*	Chairman, Moscow Soviet; PM RSFSR, dep. PM USSR
Iurkin, T. A.	Minister, agriculture commissariat (back on CC in 1956)
Lozovskii, S. A.*	General Secretary, Profintern; Director Goslitizdat (shot 1949)
Makarov, I. G.*	Plant manager; posts in industrial ministries
Mekhlis, L. Z.*	Orgburo member; chief commissar of the army
Poskrebyshev, A. N.*	Head, Stalin's chancellery
Shvarts, I. I.	Bolshevik veteran (1899); economic work (died 1951)
Veinberg, G. D.*	Soviet trade unionist; minister RSFSR food industry
Zaveniagin, A. P.	Industrial ministry (back on CC in 1952)

*Note:* Those marked with an asterisk were re-elected to the CC in 1939. A further three 1934 members (M. E. Chuvyrin, R. I. Eikhe, and N. A. Filatov) were still alive but in prison; they were never released.

Attention has centred so far on the fate of the 1934 Central Committee in the Purges. What about those people who had been part of the Central Committee elite at some point before the 17th Congress but who had not been elected to the 1934 Central Committee? A total of 126 people were elected to the Central Committee at some point between 1917 and 1930 but not in 1934. At least thirty-one of these had died before 1936, and the date of death of a further twenty is not known.<sup>81</sup> In any event, no more than ninety-five people (126 minus 31 early deaths) were definitely alive to be potential victims. Of these, some forty-four individuals died in 1937–8 and nearly all can be counted as Purge victims; some of these were even trial defendants—in January 1935 Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Kuklin; in August 1936 Zinoviev, Kamenev, G. E. Evdokimov, I. N. Smirnov; in January 1937 Serebriakov; in 1938 Krestinskii. A further fifteen were post-Purge victims of Stalin; they were executed, assassinated (Trotsky), or died in prison after 1938, including two more of the accused from the show trials, Radek and Rakovskii. In total, at least 62 per cent (59/95) were ‘repressed’. If some of those with unknown death-dates are assumed to have died in the Purges, as well as some of those who died before 1953 but with an unknown cause of death,<sup>82</sup> then the real proportion was certainly 70 per cent or more, a proportion very similar to that for the 1934 Central Committee.

Before looking closely at the elite Purges in general, it is useful to consider the four Communist leaders who were used as ‘case studies’ in this chapter and the preceding one. Nikolai Krestinskii was one of the ‘famous’ victims, although he had not been a Central Committee member for sixteen years when he was one of twenty-one defendants at the Bukharin trial in March 1938. He was shifted from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to be deputy head of the Justice Commissariat in March 1937, and a month later was arrested in his Kremlin

<sup>81</sup> Those for whom no date of death was known were: A. M. Amosov (cand. 1930), S. A. Bergavinov (cand. 1930), D. A. Bulatov (cand. 1930), A. V. Ivanov (cand. 1924), M. I. Khlopliankin (cand. 1930), F. T. Kolgushin (cand. 1927), T. K. Kondratev (cand. 1925, 1927), I. I. Kozlov (cand. 1930), A. S. Kuklin (full 1924, and a defendant in the January 1935 Zinoviev–Kamenev trial), E. F. Kulikov (full 1925, 1927), S. L. Lukashin (cand. 1925), D. E. Morozov (cand. 1923), I. T. Morozov (cand. 1924), M. K. Oshvintsev (cand. 1927, 1930), K. A. Rumiantsev (cand. 1924–30), S. M. Sobolev (cand. 1927), K. V. Sukhomlin (cand. 1927, 1930), F. F. Tsar’kov (cand. 1930), M. E. Uryvaev (cand. 1923–30), and P. Ia. Voronova (cand. 1930).

<sup>82</sup> M. A. Savelev (cand. 1930, died 1939), E. M. Iaroslavskii (cand. 1919, 1920, mem. 1921, 1922, 1939, died 1943), S. E. Chutskae (cand. 1927, 1930, died 1944), I. I. Korotkov (full 1922, 1923, died 1949), M. F. Vladimirkii (full 1918, cand. 1919, died 1951), A. M. Kollontai (full 1917, died 1952), and N. M. Antselovich (cand. 1927, 1930, full 1939, died 1952) were apparently not victims of repression, but this is less clear in the case of A. D. Avdeev (cand. 1925, died 1947) and M. M. Kharitonov (full 1923, 1924, died 1948).

Those who are known to have died *after* 1953 were: S. I. Afanas’ev (cand. 1930, died 1965), A. V. Artiukhina (cand. 1925, full 1925, 1927, died 1969), T. S. Krivov (cand. 1922, died 1966), M. K. Muranov (full 1917, 1919, cand. 1920, died 1959), E. D. Stasova (cand. 1917, full 1918, 1919, died 1966), and R. Ia. Terekhov (cand. 1930, died 1979).

apartment. Despite eleven months in the hands of the NKVD the pre-revolutionary barrister was the only defendant initially to deny his guilt, but, further 'softened up', he admitted his Trotskyism on the second day. He was found guilty and shot.<sup>83</sup>

Andrei Andreev was another veteran of the revolutionary elite, but he was one of the survivors of 1937–8, indeed one the persecutors. This was true despite the fact that he had slipped into opposition activity at the time of the trade-union debate in 1920–1. At the secret trial of army leaders in 1937 Stalin noted that Andreev had been 'a very active Trotskyist in 1921', but cited him as an example of how it was genuinely possible to change. Andreev made two vicious speeches at the February–March 1937 plenum, one damning Bukharin and Rykov. Like many of Stalin's 'team', he was later sent to oversee the Purges in the provinces, notably Uzbekistan; he also chaired the November 1938 plenum of the Komsomol Central Committee at which Kosarev, the Komsomol leader, was condemned. In 1939 Andreev was made head of a commission to investigate NKVD 'excesses', as Beria put his stamp on the secret police.<sup>84</sup>

Of the 'new entrants', Panas Liubchenko and Iosif Vareikis were both removed from the Central Committee at the October 1937 plenum. Both had been enthusiastic implementers of Stalin's programmes of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Both were seen as loyal enough to Stalin and his policies to have been elected to the Central Committee in 1934. Both had approved the various correspondence ballots and the mass expulsions at the June 1937 plenum.

Liubchenko had made a hard speech at the February–March 1937 plenum exposing various Trotskyists in the Ukraine, supporting Stalin's call for an intensified struggle, and criticizing the Ukrainian party leadership for their weakness.<sup>85</sup> The hunt for 'conspirators' in the Ukraine intensified after the arrest of Iakir, former commander of the Kiev Military District, in June 1937. In August arrests of prominent former Borot'bists (Ukrainian Left SRs) began. Prime Minister Panas Liubchenko had been denounced in a confession by one Khvyliia, a Sovnarkom official whom he had interceded with Stalin. Liubchenko had a

<sup>83</sup> V. V. Sokolov, 'N. N. Krestinskii—revoliutsioner, diplomat (1883–1939)', *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 5 (1989), 140–1; 'O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu . . . "antisovetskogo pravotrotskistskogo bloka"', 91; *Vozvrashchennye imena: Sbornik publitsisticheskikh statei* (Moscow, Novosti, 1989), i. 309–14. Krestinskii was rehabilitated, under Khrushchev, in 1963.

<sup>84</sup> "Nevol'niki v rukakh Germanskogo Reikhsvera". Rech' I. V. Stalina v Narkomate oborony', *Istochnik*, 1994, no. 3, p. 74; 'Materialy fevral'sko–martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1937 goda', *Voprosy istorii*, 1992, no. 8–9, pp. 3–9, 1995, no. 8, pp. 3–13; A. Antonov-Ovseenko, *The Time of Stalin* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1983), 125. See also comments by Medvedev and Khlevniuk on Andreev's very deep involvement in the Purges: R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 419, 465, 470, 528; Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy*, 222. It was presumably in Andreev's capacity as head of the 'excesses' commission that the imprisoned Cheka leader M. S. Kedrov personally sent him an appeal for clemency; this was cited by Khrushchev in his 1956 'Secret Speech' ('O kul'te lichnosti', 156).

<sup>85</sup> 'Materialy fevral'sko–martovskogo plenuma', *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 10, pp. 11–18.

face-to-face confrontation with Khvyliia in Stalin's presence. Following the reports of the NKVD Liubchenko was attacked at the August 1937 Ukrainian Central Committee plenum by Kossior, Zatonskii, and Gikalo—all of whom would perish in the months to follow (Liubchenko had worked closely with Kossior as far back as 1919). After rejecting the accusation he went home in one of the plenum intervals. There are two versions of what happened next: the official one, that he shot his wife and himself; and the other, that the couple were shot by NKVD agents while resisting arrest, the suicide story being put forward as a cover-up.<sup>86</sup> In any event, at the time of his 'removal' from the all-union Central Committee Liubchenko had been dead for six weeks. His brother, teenage son, mother-in-law, and three sisters-in-law were killed or sent to the GULAG. Most of the Ukrainian leadership followed Liubchenko to their deaths in 1937–8.

Vareikis, for his part, was arrested at a small station outside Moscow, en route from the Far East to the October 1937 plenum.<sup>87</sup> The arrest occurred on 9 October, so late that his name was on the typed attendance list for the 11–12 October plenum and had to be crossed off.<sup>88</sup> According to his wife he had tried to intervene on behalf of arrested comrades and had queried the guilt of Marshal Tukhachevskii, whom he had served alongside in the Eastern front battles of 1918–19.<sup>89</sup> Vareikis was evidently held in prison for over nine months, being sentenced to death on 29 July 1938 and shot on the same day. He was rehabilitated in 1956. Stalin may have had other reasons for wanting rid of Vareikis. Medvedev and Tucker both suggest, on the basis of the recollections of party veterans, that Vareikis was one of the leaders of an informal anti-Stalin bloc at the 17th Party Congress. This may have placed him, as Tucker put it, among 'the established party aristocracy, the Old Bolshevik grandees . . . [Stalin's] treasonous boyars'. There is, however, no further evidence to support this.<sup>90</sup> Going against that interpretation are Vareikis's hard-line public statements and his appointment to important posts after February 1934.

Andreev's survival is consistent with his Politburo membership, his closeness to Stalin, and his readiness to join—unquestioningly—in the spiral of persecution. The death of the other three had different explanations. Liubchenko was especially exposed as he had belonged to another revolutionary party, the Borot'bists. Another factor was the ripple-effect of denunciations. Khvyliia's confession, for

<sup>86</sup> Bachinskii and Tabachnik, 'Liubchenko', note a number of contradictions in the official account of the suicide (p. 73–5). Liubchenko was rehabilitated only in 1965, 11 years after the rest of the Ukrainian leadership.

<sup>87</sup> Lappo, 'Stoikii leninets', 105.

<sup>88</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis' 2, delo 624*.

<sup>89</sup> Vareikis, 'Vernyi syn'. The witness to Vareikis's quarrel with Stalin is supposed to have been his wife, but she also appears to have been arrested almost immediately and to have been 'repressed'. And rather than being summoned to Moscow by an angry Stalin, Vareikis's trip was consistent with planned attendance at the October 1937 plenum.

<sup>90</sup> Medvedev, *O Staline i stalinizme*, 295; Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power, 1928–1941: The Revolution From Above* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 249, 251, 319, 643, n. 26.

example, led to accusations against Liubchenko. Then there was the web of associations. The elite had known one another for two decades, and any removal of 'enemies' was bound to cast doubt about surviving colleagues. The relationship of Vareikis and Tukhachevskii, dating back to 1918, is a good example. It could equally be argued that there is only a limited point in looking for the individual explanations. After all Vareikis perished along with the rest of the regional secretaries, Liubchenko with the rest of the Ukrainian leadership, Krestinskii with the rest of the diplomatic corps.

The explanation of the Purges of 1937–8 is one of the central questions of Soviet history. There has been great debate about Stalin's role and motives, and about the scale of the violence. It will never be possible fully to explain the terrible things that happened. The Purges did, however, have several distinct components. There was a wide-scale reign of terror directed against millions of people, non-Communists and rank-and-file party members, who were executed or sent to labour camps. Dreadful as this was, it is not of direct concern to a study of the ruling elite. The second component was the 'Show Trials' and persecution of a few dozen old party guard veterans—the Krestinskiis—who had opposed Stalin in the 1920s. This bears more directly on the elite. Had these been the only victims, their destruction would have borne out Trotsky's warning about the rise of Stalin and the bureaucracy. The third component, central to this book, was the destruction of 'Stalinist' leaders in the form of the current (1934) Central Committee elite—the Liubchenkos and Vareikises. Finally, there was repression directed against leading officials (below Central Committee level) in the government, economy, army, and so on; this also takes in some Central Committee elite members who had not been re-elected in 1934.

Who was purged, and why? Arch Getty and William Chase attempted to assess elite 'vulnerability to repression'.<sup>91</sup> They argued that Old Bolsheviks were not especially vulnerable, but—true or not—this is not useful in the case of the Central Committee elite, since almost all were Old Bolsheviks. Getty and Chase found a positive correlation between vulnerability and 'high bureaucratic rank', but this is also unhelpful with the Central Committee. Certain individuals seem to have been protected. Robert Conquest suggested that Stalin showed a 'Caucasian chivalry' towards women. Klardiia Nikolaeva survived from the 1934 Central Committee, and Aleksandra Artiukhina, Aleksandra Kollontai, and Elena Stasova

<sup>91</sup> J. Arch Getty and William Chase, 'Patterns of Repression among the Soviet Elite', in Getty and Manning, *Stalinist Terror*, 225–46. This pioneering work was based on 898 members of 'the Soviet elite', of whom 427 were victims of the 1936–9 Purges. It is not clear that this is a reliable sample, at least without more evidence about how it was assembled. Getty's argument that Old Bolsheviks were not particularly vulnerable is also found in his *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933–1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 175 f. The same point has recently been made again by Robert Thurston in *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934–1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 132 f.



from earlier cohorts.<sup>92</sup> A certain number of the real old guard of the Bolsheviks, the pre-1905 activists, were spared—Badaev, Krzhizhanovskii, Petrovskii, Shvarts, and possibly Chuvyrin (who was imprisoned rather than executed). Budennyi was a plebeian hero of the Civil War. Three of those who survived had an international role—Litvinov, Lozovskii, Manuil'skii—although such a consideration did not save the rest of the diplomatic corps or the leadership of the Comintern.<sup>93</sup> Ethnic factors also do not seem to have been important. Only slightly more than half the political survivors (18/32) of the 1934 Central Committee were Great Russians. Also interesting, in the light of Stalin's apparent post-war anti-Semitism, was that fact that nearly a quarter of the total survivors (8/32) were Jews.<sup>94</sup>

Various groupings of the elite, regional party leaders, republican leaders, people's commissars (government ministers), soldiers, trade unionists, and diplomats perished, almost in their entirety. The only institutional characteristic which offered a degree of immunity was membership of the Politburo. T. H. Rigby has demonstrated that this group was relatively unaffected by the Purge, and that Stalin was not, in Rigby's words, altogether 'a disloyal patron'.<sup>95</sup> Others from Stalin's inner circle were also spared: Mekhlis from the Orgburo; Poskrebyshev, who was Stalin's secretary; and Beria, who purged the purgers.<sup>96</sup>

Rigby, in fact, saw a rational element in the elite purge. The object, as Al Capone said of Mussolini, was 'to keep the boys in line'. It followed from the potential challenge which Stalin faced, paradoxically, after the defeat of the Left and Right Oppositions. Robert Conquest argued that the Purges could best be understood as 'a statistical matter . . . rather than in terms of individuals'; one had only to persecute a 'given proportion' to achieve the desired effect.<sup>97</sup> But there was more here than the demonstration of the power to kill. Something like Hitler's 'Night of the Long Knives'—or even the destruction of the Leningrad Group in the late 1940s—made sense in these gangster-power terms. The killing of three-quarters of the 1934 Stalinist elite—not to mention the mass purges at lower levels—did not.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 68f. A number of other women perished, such as Anna Kalygina from the 1934 Central Committee. And Stalin's 'Caucasian chivalry' did not apply to wives and families of purged leaders, and even the wives of some of his closest colleagues, such as Kalinin and Molotov.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 437. Harder to explain systematically are some of the younger survivors: Broido (a former Menshevik), Bulganin, Iurkin, Makarov, Veinberg, and Zaveniagin.

<sup>94</sup> The nationality of T. A. Iurkin is not known. The Jewish survivors were Broido, the Kaganovichs, Litvinov, Lozovskii, Mekhlis, Shvarts, and Veinberg. Four more were members of Transcaucasian minorities, and the final two were Ukrainian.

<sup>95</sup> T. H. Rigby, 'Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?', *Soviet Studies*, 38: 3 (July 1986), 311–24.

<sup>96</sup> Conquest made a distinction at Politburo level between those promoted up to 1926 (e.g. Molotov) and those promoted in 1926–37 (e.g. Eikhe), and argued—not altogether convincingly—that the latter were expendable because they had no prestige (*Great Terror*, 439).

<sup>97</sup> Rigby, 'Was Stalin?', 314f.; Conquest, *Great Terror*, 118.

<sup>98</sup> It is possible that a limited exercise in 'keeping the boys in line' got out of control; see Thurston for one possible mechanism (*Life and Terror*, 130).

Some Sovietologists argued that purges were needed for 'elite renewal' in Communist systems, both to 'keep the boys in line' and to advance new cohorts to the elite. It has been suggested that purges, both at mass and elite levels, were an essential, indeed a 'permanent', feature of Communist systems.<sup>99</sup> The case was first argued in the 1950s, but its limitations became apparent with the absence at least of elite terror under Stalin's successors. In fact, as we will see, there was already a degree of elite job and personal security ('stability of cadres') even in the late Stalin period, at least within the USSR.<sup>100</sup> The Purges of 1937–8 were a unique event, both at mass and elite level.

Even taking the Purge of 1937–8 as a unique event, a number of historians have stressed the replacement of one generation of leaders by another. Robert Daniels asserted that 'virtually everyone in Soviet public life who was over the age of 37 in 1937 was eliminated from the scene'. Robert Tucker, who has produced the fullest Western biography of Stalin, made one of the most comprehensive attempts to come to terms with the purging process. He saw the 17th Congress of 1934 as Stalin's 'final estrangement from the Bolshevik party'. 'A whole generation of party members who had failed the test of fealty must go, their places to be taken by a new generation of "real Bolsheviks" who would not fail the test, who would recognise Stalin's revolutionary genius, and who would faithfully follow him in politics no matter where he might lead.'<sup>101</sup>

Tucker used a historical metaphor:

Stalin . . . was engaged in a major transformation of the Soviet order [beyond collectivization and industrialization]. His complex of political measures was designed to foster the military strength and centralized power of the new Muscovite Soviet state. The established party aristocracy, the Old Bolshevik grandees in their majority, were his treasonous boyars. [But] a revolution . . . necessitates rebuilding as well as destruction. The ruling stratum . . . must not merely be displaced but replaced by new people who meet the requirements of the transformed order.

For Tucker, this generational change had a psychological dimension as well. The 'Revolution-born political generation', which included many 'Stalinists', had as a group to go because their 'belief system' differed from that of Stalin—and from that system he was trying to implant in the newcomers through his *Short Course* party history of 1938. Stalin's Russian biographer, Dmitrii Volkogonov, also used the generational argument to explain the elite purge; a basic cause was that Stalin wanted 'functionaries of a younger generation who had not known him earlier'.<sup>102</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick has also made much of the generation factor in the

<sup>99</sup> The classic presentation of this case is Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics of Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).

<sup>100</sup> Political terror at elite level was, however, a feature of the East European satellites in the late Stalin period.

<sup>101</sup> Robert V. Daniels, *Is Russian Reformable? Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1988), 77; Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, 265.

<sup>102</sup> Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, 319, 528, 530, 538; Dmitrii Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia: Politicheskii portret I. V. Stalina* (Moscow: Novosti, 1989), vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 95.

Purges, although coming at the problem from quite a different direction. Her analysis of the replacement of officials at Central Committee and more junior levels stressed more the rational side of promotion, and she discussed the beneficiaries rather than the deceased.<sup>103</sup> The beneficiaries were the upwardly mobile party members (*vydvizhentsy*), men and women trained in the Soviet rather than in the Tsarist era, who were now given senior posts. These are often called the 'Brezhnev Generation'.

The Purges do indeed form the most important break in the history of the Soviet elite. The following three chapters will be devoted to a second generation of leaders who would be dominant from the late 1930s to the 1970s. But the generational argument is not as straightforward as is often suggested. First, while the purges did indeed throw up a large new generation of the elite, the extinction of the previous 'revolution-born' generation was neither complete nor sudden. Two elite generations coexisted at Central Committee level for a decade and a half after 1939. And secondly, although Fitzpatrick is right in saying that the rise of a new generation was indeed a long-term *consequence* of the Purges, it does not necessarily follow that Tucker, Conquest, and others are correct to argue that a desire to replace one generation by another was also a direct *cause*.

Stalin by no means eliminated every member of the elite brought up in a pre-Stalinist 'belief system'. In itself, the Purge of the 1934 Central Committee membership did not demonstrate any clear trend for rejuvenation. The average year of birth of the thirty-two political survivors of the 17th Congress Central Committee was 1888 (i.e. they were 51 in 1939), while the average year of birth for the whole committee was 1890: there was a tendency for *older* Central Committee members to survive.<sup>104</sup> It is true that of Central Committee members who served in 1917–37 two-thirds died in the Purges (excluding those who had died of natural causes beforehand). But taking the 328 people who were elected to Stalin's Central Committees *after* the Purges (at the 1939 and 1952 party congresses, and the 1941 party conference), a third were still by birth in our first generation, born before 1901. They were mostly new to the Central Committee, but they were party veterans. Indeed, in the post-Purge Central Committee, elected in 1939, the first generation was only slightly outnumbered by the second. In 1939 these enduring first-generation leaders were men and women in their late thirties or older, and the greater part had reached adulthood in Imperial Russia. And as for implanting belief systems, no less than 58 per cent (81/139) of the 1939 Central Committee had joined the party in Lenin's lifetime (i.e. before 1924); of these

<sup>103</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928–1939', *Slavic Review*, 38: 3 (1979), 377–402.

<sup>104</sup> In the case of the serving Central Committee members this was probably because the older people were, on the whole, ones Stalin had confidence in or was not afraid of. The veteran Bolsheviks he most distrusted had been removed from the Central Committee well before 1934. This survival of older cadres coincides with Getty and Chase's findings with respect to a group of 898 elite members ('Patterns of Repression', 231 f.).

eighty-one individuals, thirty-two were Old Bolsheviks and forty-six were Civil War entrants. Even in 1952, the high proportion of post-Lenin party members was the result of the *expansion* of the Central Committee. There were, in absolute terms, nearly as many people on the Central Committee in 1952 who had joined the party before 1924 as there had been in 1939. Taking the 'late Stalin elite' as whole, a third fall into the first generation rather than the second.<sup>105</sup>

Rather than generational change in its own right, a better key to understanding the breadth of the Purge was the *cohesiveness* of the old Central Committee. The extraordinarily wide-reaching nature of the Purges, even at Central Committee level, and the severity of their method—leaders were killed rather than retired—was symptomatic not only of the ferocity and political paranoia of Stalin and the NKVD, and the dynamics of the Purge process. Stalin's primary concerns were not 'elite renewal' and generational change for their own sake. What mattered for him was the preservation of his own personal power and the consolidation of what he perceived as the interests of the Revolution; he, in fact, saw these two goals as identical in every respect. The elite were at risk to the extent that they appeared to be obstructing the achievement of the twin goals. If 'keeping the boys in line' was the objective, this could not, given elite cohesiveness, be achieved by removing a few dozen scapegoats. If uncovering more hidden enemies was the objective, that too could not convincingly be carried out on a small scale.<sup>106</sup> This was even more difficult if the punishment demanded by Stalin was so severe that it became for the elite a life-or-death struggle.

Whether the cohesiveness of the elite was active, passive, or potential is less clear. It has been argued that the reluctance of members of the Central Committee to take more decisive action against their peers was what eventually led Stalin to purge them.<sup>107</sup> In fact there is little specific evidence of elite opposition to Stalin's attempt to consolidate his own power or even to purge the elite. 'We must indeed all hang together,' Benjamin Franklin had said of another revolutionary elite, 'or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.' The Old Bolsheviks failed this test. There is no archival evidence to support the claims that the elite opposed

<sup>105</sup> The 'late Stalin elite' is those elected to the Central Committee in 1939, 1941, and 1952. In this group 104 individuals (of 313 whose age is known) fall into the first generation. Although Robert Daniels has made some of the most penetrating contributions to generational analysis of the Soviet elite, it was misleading to suggest that 'virtually everyone in Soviet public life who was over the age of 37 in 1937 was eliminated from the scene' (*Is Russia Reformable?*, 77). The arguments about generations and about the particular vulnerability of the Old Bolsheviks are rejected in the recent history of the Purges by Thurston (*Life and Terror*, 133 f.).

<sup>106</sup> It is not unreasonable to suggest that Stalin acted from a genuine fear of political conspiracy against himself. There have been suggestions that this was, at least to some extent, a *genuine* fear of a *genuine* conspiracy: see Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 377; Getty, *Origins*, 119–28, 168, 255, n. 84; and Thurston, *Life and Terror*, 56–7.

<sup>107</sup> See e.g. Stephen Cohen's biography of Bukharin, in which the February–March 1937 plenum is described as 'the most fateful meeting of the Central Committee since 1917': Stephen Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography 1888–1938* (London: Wildwood House, 1974), 369–72.

severe punishment for Riutin in 1932.<sup>108</sup> The famous Postyshev incident at the February–March 1937 plenum turns out to have been exaggerated. In his 1956 ‘Secret Speech’, Khrushchev revealed that Politburo candidate member Postyshev had openly expressed doubts about the search for enemies: Postyshev said that he did not understand how one of his subordinates, Karpov, could have been a Trotskyist. In fact there was a large element of self-preservation in what Postyshev said, and he fully participated in the witch-hunt in other respects. His openly expressed doubts were also very much the exception at the February–March 1937 plenum, and he was publicly criticized by other participants, among them Panas Liubchenko.<sup>109</sup> If there had been more documentary evidence of elite-level opposition to the Purges, Soviet historians would have revealed it under Khrushchev or Gorbachev. Graeme Gill has suggested that the purge of so many members of the Central Committee reflected ‘that body’s weakness’, and a perceptive historian has used a Russian expression meaning something like ‘non-cohesiveness’ (*razobshchennost*) to describe a fatal weakness of the elite.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, it does seem that Stalin and his group had difficulty getting their own way, and if nothing else the elite served as a brake on some of their radical policy initiatives, at least those concerning the elite itself. The attempt to deal with the punishment of the ‘Rightist’ leaders Bukharin and Rykov at the secret December 1936 plenum was unsuccessful. Even the decision of the February–March 1937 plenum regarding Bukharin and Rykov may have been a compromise. The two Rightist leaders were removed from the Central Committee and the party, but not committed directly to the Military Tribunal; rather, their case was transferred to the NKVD.<sup>111</sup> The brake of elite solidarity could be overcome, but it was still an important factor.

<sup>108</sup> Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy*, 75 f. One of the main (and convincing) arguments of this important book is that there were no hard and soft factions within the Politburo.

<sup>109</sup> Khrushchev, ‘O kul’te lichnosti’, 139 f. Postyshev was also first secretary of the Kiev region party committee and second secretary in the Ukraine. M. M. Karpov was the head of the agitprop department of the Kiev regional committee. Postyshev’s remarks, made on 4 March 1937, were recently printed in full (‘Materialy fevral’sko–martovskogo plenuma’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 5–6, pp. 3–8). For Liubchenko’s comments see the section of the minutes printed in *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 10, pp. 12, 17. Postyshev came under attack again at the January 1938 plenum, this time for excessive harshness; see excerpts in Khlevniuk, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro*, 159–67. As we have seen, Postyshev was eventually removed from the Central Committee by correspondence ballot and arrested in February 1938. At that time, one of the accusations made against him was that while first secretary in Kuibyshev region he had excluded too many Communists from the party; another was—paradoxically—that he had tolerated enemies at both Kiev and Kuibyshev (RTsKhIDNI, *fond* 17, *opis*’ 2, *delo* 640). The fullest account of this affair is in Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy*, 216–28.

<sup>110</sup> Gill, *Origins*, 285; Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro: Mekhanizmy*, 228.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Fragmenty stenogrammy dekabrs’kogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1936 goda’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 1, pp. 3–22. A special Central Committee commission of 35 was set up at the February–March 1937 plenum to deal with the issue of Bukharin and Rykov. The views of some 20 members are known. Ezhov advocated shooting the two ‘Rightists’, as evidently did Budenny, Iakir, Kosarev, Manuil’skii, and Shvernik. Stalin’s proposal—which may have been a tactical one, anticipating Central Committee resistance—was to remove Bukharin and Rykov from the Central Committee and the party and to

The Central Committee elite may not have acted consciously to defend themselves, let alone conspire against Stalin. Nevertheless, as was shown in the first part of this chapter, they had a great deal in common. At the 1934 congress Nikolai Ezhov, head of the congress's Mandate Commission and one of the key officials in Stalin's party machine, drew attention to this. In the party as a whole, he reported, only 10 per cent had joined before 1921. The situation among the delegates was quite different from that of the party in general: 'the tested layer of party members [i.e. the delegates] who passed through the school of the Civil War and the underground, holds a leading role.'<sup>112</sup> As we have seen, the 'tested layer' were even more dominant among the minority of delegates elected to the Central Committee. There is no reason to suppose that when Ezhov said this he was seeing this 'leading role' as something to criticize. Ezhov himself had apparently joined the party in March 1917 and belonged to the 'tested layer'. Within three years, however, he would be head of the NKVD and Stalin's chief instrument in the Purges. By that time the apartness of the party veterans would make them vulnerable.

It was not just that the Central Committee elite were roughly the same age; they had a similar background in Imperial Russia, had been together through the schools of the underground and, especially, the Civil War, and had been posted in the following decade and a half back and forth across the socialist continent. This cohesiveness was accentuated both by being a self-conscious 'old party guard' and by being a tiny minority among a hostile, or at best ambivalent, population. The cohesion of 'family' networks within this elite were not self-consciously anti-Stalin but was a cohesion of life experience; there was a matrix of Old Bolshevik loyalties. The Postyshev episode was overrated, but Postyshev probably did find it hard to accept that Karpov was a Trotskyist, and to make his point he cited other Central Committee members—Grin'ko, Iakir, and Vareikis (n.b.)—who had worked with Karpov when they had held posts in Kiev.<sup>113</sup> Stalin himself, at the February–March 1937 plenum (in a passage excluded from the original published version), complained about Ordzhonikidze's mistaken trust in Central Committee member V. V. Lominadze. Indeed, the negative side of the network of

transfer their case to the NKVD. This proposal was supported by Krupskaja, Molotov, M. I. Ul'ianova (Lenin's sister), Vareikis, and Voroshilov. In the end, not surprisingly, this was also the decision of the commission and of the plenum. But a number of commission members had specifically said that although Bukharin and Rykov should be excluded from the Central Committee and the party they should not be shot: this group included Antipov, Khrushchev, Kosior, Litvinov, Nikolaeva, Petrovskii, Postyshev, and Shkiriakov ('Materialy fevral'sko–martovskogo plenuma', *Voprosy istorii*, 1993, no. 7, pp. 23–4). See also 'O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu . . . "antisovetskogo pravotrotskistskogo bloka"', 77–83, and comments by Khrushchev in the 1956 'Secret Speech' ('O kul'te lichnosti', 138–40). Ul'ianova was a member of the Central Control Commission, not the Central Committee. No opinion was recorded for 15 members of the commission (including Andreev). Not all of those who advocated 'milder' treatment were actually purged in 1937–8.

<sup>112</sup> *XVII s"ezd*, 303.

<sup>113</sup> Iakir was to be one of the first army leaders to be purged, only a few months later.

associations throughout the elite—its cohesion—was one of the main points of Stalin's concluding speech.<sup>114</sup> Stalin genuinely feared opposition, and the particular Old Bolshevik generation, with their close personal relationships and their history of past opposition, were a thicket in which present-day oppositionists and 'two-facers' might hide. It was precisely the cohesion of the Old Bolshevik elite which made them politically suspect.

The cohesiveness of experience tied together the two sub-groups that were laid out in the first part of this chapter, the revolutionary elite (elected for the first time in 1917–22) and the 'new entrants' (elected for the first time from 1923 onwards). They shared a similar fate in the Purges. Of the seventy-eight people in the revolutionary elite, at least eighteen died of natural causes before 1936; of the surviving sixty individuals, forty-three (72 per cent) died in 1936–8 and only seventeen survived. Even more remarkable was the fate of the new entrants, who supposedly were hand-picked by Stalin. Dates of death are now known for 167 out of 187 of these; of the 167, some 150 were still alive in 1937, of whom 117 (78 per cent) were killed in the Purges, a higher percentage than for the revolutionary elite. (The overall proportion of the new entrants purged was likely to have been even higher, as there are twenty of them for whom no death date is known—they probably also died in the Purges.) However one looks at it, more than two-thirds of each group were destroyed by the system they helped to create.

There was another source of cohesion—and of conflict with Stalin. This went beyond a common age and a common experience, and was something shared with other societies and polities. The Central Committee elite was a self-conscious bureaucracy, in the neutral sense of that word. Moshe Lewin is the historian who has most cogently laid out this side of developments. The elite—especially after 1928–32—wanted stability. The system, they thought, should be run in the interests of the top layers of the bureaucracy—and indeed it would end up being run this way under Brezhnev in the 1960s and 1970s. This desire reckoned without the personality of Stalin, who launched the Purges precisely to prevent such a 'normalization'. It may have been that Stalin, like Gorbachev fifty years later, found he had an elite with which he could not co-operate. For Lewin, the 'method' behind the 'madness' of the Purges was that Stalin 'refused . . . to accept the contours of the pattern emerging under his own . . . rule, whereby the new social groups, especially the state and ruling strata, began to take shape and consolidate their positions'. 'Letting the new and sprawling administration settle and get encrusted in their chairs and habits could also encourage them to try and curtail . . . the personalised ruling style of the chief of state—and this was probably a real prospect the paranoid leader did not relish.' What was trying to coalesce in the 1930s was the 'command-administrative system', a tenured bureaucracy, a ruling class, and

<sup>114</sup> 'Materialy fevral'sko-martovskogo plenuma', *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 11–12, p. 14.

Stalin was trying to block this. He would not, as the later history of the USSR showed, succeed.<sup>115</sup>

Whatever particular aspirations and cohesion *this* bureaucracy may have had, Stalin had a general distrust of bureaucracy in general. Such distrust was something he had inherited from Lenin and—ironically—shared with his arch-enemy Trotsky.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, Stalin saw the ruling elite as not only potentially disloyal, not only becoming bureaucratized (in a negative sense), but also as less than ideal for the new tasks at hand. This *functional* argument probably fits best on top of other arguments. Stalin had already decided that very extensive changes were required in the elite. The important thing here is that he was not inhibited by considerations that the top-level bureaucracy were irreplaceable. Whether the revolutionary elite and the ‘new entrants’ really were ripe for destruction is a debatable point. It clashes with some interpretations—such as Daniels’s—which stress precisely the ‘natural selection’ of the elite of the 1920s as people ‘who carried out orders effectively and were resolute in combating opposition activities’.<sup>117</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick suggests that the elite were ageing, although this is unconvincing. They were, for example, younger than the elite would be even in the 1950s or any subsequent decade of Soviet history.<sup>118</sup> Of course Stalin may have seen that, because the Revolution had thrown them up into supreme power as very young men, the elite could stay there for a long period. The active career for the average member of the 1934 Central Committee would have come to an end in 1955 (i.e. at age 65), not 1937. It was true that the world within which the elite was operating was changing drastically, as a more complex economic and political system developed. There were certainly reservations within the Politburo about the low educational level of even senior officials, for example, of the secretaries of regional party committees.<sup>119</sup> But, from hindsight, the successor generation was little better.

What is clear is that, although he, needed the support of the group immediately around him (the Politburo), Stalin had no feeling of loyalty to the extended elite

<sup>115</sup> Lewin, *Making*, 278, 281 f., 309; Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* (New York: New Press, 1994), 73, 91, 182, 187. For the most recent version see Lewin’s ‘Bureaucracy and the Stalinist State’, in *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, ed. Ian Kershaw and M. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 53–74.

<sup>116</sup> Lars Lih has laid out Stalin’s ‘anti-bureaucratic scenario’ in *Stalin’s Letters to Molotov, 1925–1936* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 10–17. Lewin makes a similar point that Stalin’s sense of weakness in 1918 in the face of ‘bourgeois’ specialists made him paranoid about all specialists (*Making*, 196).

<sup>117</sup> Daniels, *Conscience*, 169; see Lewin’s similar comments on ‘natural selection’ in Chap. 1.

<sup>118</sup> Fitzpatrick hypothesizes about the impact of the Civil War generation. They were a ‘potential constituency’ to support Stalin’s initiatives, but they were an ageing one ‘whose value diminished with each passing year’. They still had the required ‘vigour, zeal, and self-sacrifice’ in 1929, but not in the later 1930s (‘Legacy’, 394 f.). Oleg Khlevniuk also suggests that ill health or loss of energy was a factor explaining the fall of certain of Stalin’s Politburo colleagues, such as Ordzhonikidze and Chubar’ (*Politburo: Mekhanizmy*, 232 f.).

<sup>119</sup> O. V. Khlevniuk, *1937–i: Stalin, NKVD, i sovetskoe obshchestvo* (Moscow: Respublika, 1992), 78 f.



(i.e. the Central Committee membership as a whole). Stalin was from the Old Bolsheviks. This gave him prestige within the party as a whole, but he felt no particular tie to his fellow veterans as a group. At the 1934 congress he attacked senior party officials: 'These puffed up magnates [*vel'mozhi*] think they are irreplaceable, and that they can violate the decisions of leading organs with impunity. What should be done with such party workers [*rabotniki*]? They must without hesitation be removed from their leading posts, irrespective of past services.' Three years later, at the February–March 1937 plenum, Stalin put forward a concrete mechanism to improve the ideological level of the party and to advance new cadres. Every party secretary, from party cell to region, should choose two people as possible replacements. 'They say: where could two replacements be found for each, there aren't such people, there aren't such party workers. That is not true comrades. We have tens of thousands of capable, talented people. It is only necessary to find out who they are and to move them up, so that they don't get stuck in place and begin to rot.' Even more ominously, he said in his concluding speech that 'we old ones [*stariki*], members of the Politburo, will soon depart and leave the stage. That is a law of nature. And we would like a range of replacements, and to do that in an organized way we need to work on this now . . .'.<sup>120</sup>

To return to the issue of cohesion; the very way in which the Purges unfolded was instructive. Involved here was both calculation and miscalculation. On the one hand, even Stalin did not know the full extent of what was going to happen. On the other hand, even the measures that he did plan, and his responses to events, were carried out with political cunning. However much the elite was committed to Stalin, however fully it was prepared, naively or even cynically, to accept accusations against others of Trotskyism or involvement with foreign spies, it was never going to vote for its own physical destruction. Molotov himself gave the best explanation to the poet Feliks Chuev:<sup>121</sup>

[MOLOTOV:] Listen, it was not the case that the minority excluded the majority. It happened gradually. Seventy excluded ten–fifteen people, then sixty excluded another fifteen. So the majority and minority were in order.

[CHUEV:] That shows brilliant tactics, but it still does not show correctness.

[MOLOTOV:] Excuse me, but it was a response to the actual situation, it was not simply tactics. It gradually unfolded during the sharp struggle in various sectors. Here and there it was possible to be patient: we held back, although we did not trust them. Here and there it was impossible to be patient. And gradually . . . all was done following democratic centralism, without formal violation. In reality it led to a situation in the CC in which the minority of this majority [*sic*] remained, but without formal violations. This did not formally violate democratic centralism, this gradual but still quite rapid process of clearing the way.

<sup>120</sup> *XVII s"ezd*, 34; 'Materialy fevral'sko–martovskogo plenuma', *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 3, p. 14; no. 11–12, p. 18.

<sup>121</sup> Chuev, *Sto sorok besed*, 462 f.

The Purges were thus more logical—and successful—than is sometimes suggested; if not in terms of their medium-term or final objectives, then at least in the tactics by which they were carried out. Stalin's earlier caution is shown by the use of show trials and the like to demonstrate to the surviving Central Committee elite, as well as to the population at large, the seriousness of the 'crimes' involved. This caution is also shown by the observance, at least up until the beginning of 1938, of 'legal' norms, in the form of plenums, correspondence ballots, and so on.

A final point about the Purges may seem obvious, but it needs to be made. The elite did not expect that lethal political repression would affect them. It was not a question of 'hanging together' or 'hanging separately'. They did not even realize that they were standing on the scaffold. Even as late as the June 1937 plenum, when a number of their contemporaries were being drawn into the accusations, the majority believed the process would not affect them. They knew they themselves had not done anything wrong, that they themselves were not 'enemies of the people'. The corollary was that after 1938 the new elite, both the Politburo and the Central Committee, knew that the experience must not be repeated. That the Purges were a unique event rather than a permanent feature was due not only to the particular world situation of the 1930s, not only to the position of Stalin, not only to the generational factor. It was also due to the fact that the elite were now aware of the consequences of the process, should it get out of hand again. The Central Committee elite would never again be so vulnerable, and this, as we shall see, was what Khrushchev's Secret Speech and his policy of de-Stalinization were all about.

[Y]ou didn't come to power only yesterday. No one could 'make their way' to a responsible post without Your permission.

Who placed so-called 'enemies of the people' in the most responsible posts of the state, the party, the army, and the diplomatic corps?

Joseph Stalin.

Who implanted so-called 'wreckers' throughout the soviet and party apparatus?

Joseph Stalin.

Such were the accusations of the Old Bolshevik defector Fedor Raskol'nikov in his famous 'open letter' of August 1939.<sup>122</sup> Such was the paradox of the 1920s and 1930s. The elite destroyed under Stalin in 1937–8 was one which, for the most part, had taken shape in 1922–34, at a time when he was the most powerful figure in the leadership, and at a time when he oversaw all appointments. There are different interpretations of this. Stalin may have had less control over the developing elite in the 1920s than he is given credit for—by Raskol'nikov and others. Or the purge of Stalin's elite may have taken place for reasons which were not politically

<sup>122</sup> F. Raskol'nikov, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo Stalinu', in *Reabilitirovan posmertno* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaya literatura, 1988), *vypusk* 1, pp. 348 f.

rational. It may have come from Stalin's political megalomania—as some of his most ferocious critics have argued—or it may have come from structural reasons beyond Stalin's control—as some revisionist historians have argued. Understanding the paradox requires accepting that no simple explanation is sufficient. Stalin did not rebuild the party elite entirely in his own image in the 1920s. And he developed extraordinary requirements for loyalty, that were based on a particular ideology and pathology. The 'Stalinist' elite, for its part, had interests that were distinct from those of Stalin, and these concerned careers and group interests as much as programmes.

Elite considerations give greater continuity to Soviet history than many historians have allowed. For twenty years, despite political infighting and economic uncertainty, Soviet Russia was dominated at the level of the Central Committee by one elite generation of revolutionaries. That generation carried out the Revolution, won the Civil War, consolidated the Communist dictatorship, and carried through a second social revolution at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. The destruction of much of that generation ended the first period of Soviet history.

## 3

## Stalin's New Elite, 1939–1956

As far as the young cadres are concerned . . . [f]irst, they comprise the great majority, secondly, they are young and will be here for a long time, thirdly, they love new things, a valuable quality for every Bolshevik party worker, and fourthly . . . they are developing so rapidly that the time is not far off when they will catch up with the old ones . . . and become worthy replacements.

I. V. Stalin, Report to the 18th Party Congress, 1939

The intelligentsia has changed, becoming by and large a completely new intelligentsia, linked with all its roots to the working class and the peasantry. The Soviet intelligentsia is made up of yesterday's workers and peasants and the sons of workers and peasants, who have been promoted to posts of command.

A. A. Zhdanov, Report to the 18th Party Congress, 1939

Information about the congress delegates . . . shows how our party consistently carries through the directive of Comrade Stalin on the necessity of continuing toward the combination, the unification, of old and young cadres in one common orchestra of those which will lead the work of the party and the state.

N. M. Pegov, Report to the 19th Party Congress, 1952

The two decades after the Purges were in many ways as tumultuous as the preceding two decades, although they were less disastrous for the elite. For the first two years after the 18th Congress the focus of the party's attention was on preparing the armed forces and the economy for war. From 22 June 1941 war became the absolute priority—in the catastrophic first eighteen months of the German advance and then in the massive Soviet counter-attacks. After the eventual triumph over Nazi Germany the Communist leadership faced the giant tasks of economic reconstruction, of re-establishing control over its own population, and of establishing control over peripheral territories—annexed in 1939–45 or brought under Moscow's political and military influence. In addition, the USSR had to compete with the United States.

During the war power was held by emergency institutions, the most important of which was the State Defence Committee (GKO), but after 1945 there was a

formal return to pre-war bodies. For most of this period, however, power was concentrated in the hands of the ageing dictator, and even the formal norms of party life were ignored. Towards the end of Stalin's life, in 1952, there was finally another party congress, the 19th. The elite elected to the Central Committee at that congress would run the country even after Stalin's death in March 1953. Stalin was an essential element of Stalinism, but his death, on 5 March 1953, was less of a watershed than is often thought. The period up to early 1956 was in many ways a continuum, only ended by the ascendancy of Khrushchev and the recasting of the administrative system. The worst excesses were stopped, never to be repeated, and in the summer of 1953 Beria was removed from power and the secret police brought under central control. Prisoners were released *en masse* from the GULAG, but mistakes were not yet publicly admitted. There were open changes of political practice: the prime minister and the senior party secretary were no longer the same person, and the rate of meetings of the Central Committee and Presidium was in accord with the party rules. The situation was uncertain, and lip-service was still paid to the Stalin cult. The 'thaw' identified with Khrushchev only began to develop after the 20th Congress in 1956. There were attempts to deal with tasks in domestic and foreign policy (notably the troubled state of agriculture), but this was still largely a case of fine-tuning the Stalinist model. Khrushchev himself was still an advocate of heavy industry. But the most striking element of continuity was that the top leadership—except for Stalin and Beria—and the elite were still in place.

## A New Elite: The Class of '38

The Purges of 1937–8 eliminated the larger part of an elite generation, and the congresses of 1939 and 1952 marked the emergence of a new one. A high proportion of the first-generation leaders—the cohort born before 1901—were swept away in the Purges. Their replacements in the republics and regions, in the commissariats, and in the army were as a rule not their contemporaries but much younger people. This second generation, born between 1901 and 1920, if not these individual 'replacements', would dominate the Central Committee elite for the next forty years. The 'late Stalinist elite' will be defined here as the 328 members of the Central Committee from the post-Purges consolidation in early 1939 to the eve of the denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress in early 1956 (i.e. those elected at the 18th and 19th Congresses and the 18th Conference, in 1939, 1952, and 1941 respectively).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The terms 'revolutionary elite', 'early Stalinist elite', 'late Stalinist elite', 'post-Stalin elite' relate to *historical periods* (1917–23, 1923–39, 1939–56, and 1956–81), while 'first generation', 'second generation', and 'third generation' relate to *cohorts* (those born before 1901, in 1901–20, and in 1921–40). A number of individuals can be considered as members of both the early Stalinist elite and the late Stalinist elite, i.e. they were Central Committee members in both periods.

**Table 3.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1934–1956

Congress	17th	18th	18th Cf.	19th	20th
	Jan.–Feb.	Mar.	Feb.	Oct.	Feb.
	1934	1939	1941	1952	1956
Full members	71	71	71	125	133
Candidate members	68	68	68	111	122
Total members/candidates	139	139	139	236	255
In previous CC	93	24	120	65	142
Not in previous CC	46	115	19	171	113
In next CC	24	120	65	142	127
Not in next CC	115	19	74	104	128
Turnover (%)	33	83	14	53	44

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected. Although the 18th Conference in February 1941 did not lead to the complete re-election of the CC there was significant turnover. In the 1939 column the 'in next CC' and 'not in next CC' rows refer to 1941, as do the 'in previous CC' and 'not in previous CC' rows in the 1952 column.

What were the roles in the system of these 328 leaders of the late Stalinist elite? How stable was their position? How were they different from those who had gone before, the revolutionary elite of 1917–23 or the early Stalinist elite of 1923–39? To what extent were they a cohesive group? It is more difficult to get information about the members of the 1939 and 1952 Central Committees than about those of earlier or later committees, but generally the picture is clear. The extreme changes of turnover and size of the Central Committee are shown in Table 3.1. The massacre of the early Stalinist elite in the Purges (i.e. between 1934 and 1939) was unique in the scale of its turnover, as well as in the extent of its violence. The 18th Congress, in 1939, brought forward a new elite. The change from the 17th Congress is especially striking, because the two Central Committees were exactly the same size, and no fewer than 115 of the 139 members of the 1939 Central Committee were new. The casualties were discussed in Chapter 2. The rise of the new elite was intentional; this was a point Stalin made emphatically at the 18th Congress in 1939, when he devoted a long part of his Central Committee report to the 'selection, promotion, and allocation of cadres'. There was little change under late Stalinism; N. M. Pegov's Credentials Commission report, in October 1952, repeated Stalin's 1939 words more or less exactly.<sup>2</sup>

The new elite, however, turned out to be much more secure than the old, and this raises several questions about the nature of the Stalinist system. Against

<sup>2</sup> XVIII s"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi partii (b), 10–21 marta 1939 g.: *Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: OGIZ/GIPL, 1939), 31; *Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6. See the quotations at the start of this chapter.

the backdrop of 1937–8 some observers suggested that ‘the Purge’, both at mass and elite levels, was an essential, indeed ‘permanent’ feature of Communist systems.<sup>3</sup> The limitations of that interpretation became clear given the absence at least of elite terror under Stalin’s successors, but even now historians often stress 1953 as a turning-point, an interpretation perhaps influenced by Khrushchev’s ‘Secret Speech’ of 1956. In fact, looking at the situation *from the point of view of the Central Committee elite*, across the Stalin era, the Ezhovshchina of 1937–8 was the aberration, and physical security and even job security were more the norm.<sup>4</sup>

There were, of course, exceptions to this greater security, even as far as the Central Committee elite was concerned. Two of these exceptions were particularly important. The first were the five CC members who held high positions in the army and air force and who were executed in 1941.<sup>5</sup> Some of these punishments were evidently a response to supposed shortcomings revealed just before the war, and at least one was a response to the Barbarossa catastrophe. In contrast to the 1937–8 terror there was at least some brutal logic to them, *pour encourager les autres*. The second exception were the four top-level victims of the so-called ‘Leningrad Affair’ of 1949. N. A. Voznesenskii, A. A. Kuznetsov, M. I. Rodionov, and P. S. Popkov were removed from office at the start of 1949 and secretly shot in November 1950. Two other individuals perished separately in the late Stalin period, General G. I. Kulik and S. A. Lozovskii.<sup>6</sup> It would seem that out of 158

<sup>3</sup> As mentioned in Chap. 2, this case was made by Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge: Politics of Soviet Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956).

<sup>4</sup> Some recent works have suggested limitations on Stalin’s power: Iu. N. Zhukov, ‘Bor’ba za vlast’ v rukovodstve SSSR v 1945–1952 godakh’, *Voprosy istorii*, 1995, no. 1, pp. 23–39; Yoram Gorlizki, ‘Party Revivalism and the Death of Stalin’, *Slavic Review*, 54: 1 (1995), 1–22. More conventional views survive: Iu. S. Aksenov, ‘Put’ k kommunizmu: Utopii i realii’, *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, pp. 109–21; Iu. S. Aksenov, ‘Apogei stalinizma: Poslevoennaia piramida vlasti’, *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1990, no. 11, pp. 90–104; R. G. Pikhoia, ‘O vnutripoliticheskoi bor’be v Sovetskom rukovodstve. 1945–1958 gg.’, *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1995, no. 6, pp. 3–14.

<sup>5</sup> G. K. Savchenko, deputy head of the Artillery Administration, and Generals A. D. Loktionov, G. M. Shtern, and Ia. V. Smushkevich were shot near Kuibyshev on 28 October 1941, although most or all had been arrested before the outbreak of war (A. Vaksberg, ‘Taina oktiabria 1941-go’, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 20 April 1988, p. 13). General D. G. Pavlov, commander of Western Army Group, was sacked and executed in July 1941 following the encirclement and destruction of his command. It was perhaps an example of Stalin’s ‘loyal patronage’ that Marshals Voroshilov and Budenny did not share Pavlov’s fate. The fullest discussion of these events, and post-1938 terror in general, is Michael Parrish, *The Lesser Terror: Soviet State Security, 1939–1953* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> In late February 1942 Kulik was disgraced after of his failure to block the German entry into the Crimea. He was demoted from marshal to major-general and expelled from the Central Committee, by correspondence ballot (*oprosom*). He was also accused of drunkenness. A Civil War hero—commander of artillery in the 1st Cavalry Army—he held various army commands after 1942. He was arrested in January 1947 and shot in 1950 (Iu. Shumeiko, ‘Kulik’, *Kommunist vooruzhennyi sil*, 1990, no. 10, pp. 61–4; ‘Sud’ba Marshala G. I. Kulika’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 9, p. 107). Lozovskii was caught up in the anti-Jewish terror in 1952; see V. P. Naumov (ed.), *Nepravdnyi sud: Poslednyi Stalinskii rastrel: Stenogramma sudebnogo protsesssa nad chlenam Evreiskogo antifashistskogo komiteta* (Moscow: Nauka, 1994).

Central Committee full members or candidates elected in 1939 and 1941, as 'few' as eleven were killed as a result of political terror, that is, 7 per cent of the total.<sup>7</sup> It is often suggested that Stalin was planning an assault at least on some of his older comrades at the time of the 1952 'Doctors' Plot', but that remains speculation.

Not only was the late Stalinist elite less vulnerable to physical terror than the early Stalinist elite, it was also relatively stable. At the 18th Conference, held in February 1941, there were again changes to the Central Committee, but they were carried out in a controlled way. Some nineteen members and candidates were dropped and nineteen new ones were added. With a number of internal promotions and demotions (between full and candidate status), the balance between members and candidates was exactly the same as in 1939.<sup>8</sup> What appears to have happened is that individuals were demoted or dismissed—but not executed—for failures in their particular 'sector'. In most cases the conference in effect ratified promotions and demotions made months or years before. These did not necessarily involve political disgrace; for example, the 'front-line' Belorussian Military District was a Central Committee-level post, and when General M. P. Kovalev

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that there were other direct or indirect victims of repression. M. M. Kaganovich, brother of Lazar' Kaganovich, committed suicide in early 1941 when he was censured for the quality of his work in the aircraft industry; suicide may well have been the alternative to arrest. Some 21 of the members elected in 1939 or 1941 have death dates before 1953 and were not known victims of the Purges or the war. Of these, 10 were men or women in their sixties and seventies whose deaths were almost certainly due to natural causes. Of the other 11 A. S. Shcherbakov and A. A. Zhdanov died at 45 and 52 respectively, but the consensus is that they died of natural causes—certainly they did not suffer posthumous disgrace. Perhaps some of the other nine with 'early' deaths suffered repression, but this did not come out in the later anti-Stalin campaigns of Khrushchev and Gorbachev. V. P. Zhuravlev evidently died at age 44 (in 1946), and given that he was an official in the secret police there must be some question about his fate; he had been dropped as a Central Committee candidate member in February 1941. V. F. Starchenko died at 44, M. I. Starostin (first secretary, Murmansk region) at 44, V. V. Vakhrushchev (minister of the Coal Industry) at 45, I. V. Rogov at 50, K. I. Nikolaev at 51, G. D. Veinberg at 55, and P. Ia. Seleznev (first secretary, Krasnodar region) and A. I. Efremov at 57. By way of a simple actuarial comparison with a time when there presumably was no top-level terror, some 15 of the 255 Central Committee members elected at the 1956 congress died before the 1961 congress, nine of them under the age of 55.

A further 11 of the 1939/41 members have no known date of death and are people about whom we have not been able to get post-1952 biographical information: D. I. Antonov, N. V. Feklenko, A. A. Frolkov, V. V. Iartsev, S. P. Ignat'ev, A. B. Iskanderov, P. Kh. Kulakov, G. S. Rastegin, I. P. Sergeev, F. V. Shagimardanov, and I. A. Vlasov.

<sup>8</sup> Four full members (N. M. Antselovich, I. A. Likhachev, M. M. Litvinov, and F. A. Merkulov) and 15 candidate members were removed from the Central Committee. Two full members were demoted to candidate status (I. A. Benediktov and E. A. Shchadenko). Four candidates (V. G. Dekanozov, N. S. Patolichiev, G. M. Popov, and V. P. Pronin) were promoted to full member. More unprecedented, two individuals who had not been elected at all at the 1939 congress became full members, and 17 became candidates. (The two new full members are well known to students of Soviet history: O. V. Kuusinen and M. A. Suslov.) Turnover may have been exaggerated by the addition of new posts, like five representatives of the new Baltic republics and Karelia. If the policy was to maintain a fixed size (71 members and 68 candidates), new members could only be added by removing others; their removal did not necessarily mean they had been purged.



was transferred from there to the less important Kharkov Military District (in May 1940) he in effect lost his eligibility for Central Committee membership and at the 18th Conference was removed. (His replacement in Belorussia, the ill-starred General D. G. Pavlov, had already been a candidate member, in his capacity as commander of tank forces.) Despite his removal from the Central Committee, Kovalev held senior army posts until his retirement in 1955.

For all its enormity, the war itself had relatively little impact on individual membership of the Central Committee. General M. P. Kirponos was killed in action, and three civilian party leaders were apparently lost. M. A. Burmistenko (Ukrainian second secretary) and P. M. Liubavin (first secretary of Stalino region) disappeared in the Kiev encirclement, and K. Ia. Siare (a secretary of the Estonian Central Committee) may have been captured. Only a single Central Committee member was a casualty after the initial catastrophe of 1941: General I. R. Apanasenko, who died of wounds in 1943.<sup>9</sup> The one wartime Central Committee plenum, in January 1944, was relatively well attended, by fifty-eight of seventy-one full members elected in 1941, as well as by thirty-nine of sixty-eight candidate members.<sup>10</sup>

The rate of turnover, bearing in mind the length of time between supreme party meetings, was nowhere near that between 1934 and 1939. 'Only' 38 per cent (27/71) of the seventy-one full members elected in 1941 were not re-elected in 1952, compared to 77 per cent of the 1934 full members who were not re-elected in 1939. It is true that turnover among candidates between 1941 and 1952 was much higher than among full members, with 69 per cent (47/68) failing to gain re-election. However, a long period, eleven years, had elapsed. Although it is not a straightforward calculation, especially for 1941–52, the rate of turnover *over time* was not especially high in Stalin's later years. For members and candidates together, *annual* turnover between 1939 and 1941 was 7.1 per cent, and between 1941 and 1952 4.6 per cent. Neither figure was exceptional compared to other periods of Soviet history; the annual rate between 1930 and 1934, for example, had been 9.1 per cent, and between 1956 and 1961 it would be 8.8 per cent.<sup>11</sup>

The war may have been a factor in stabilizing the position of the new elite. Stalin directly referred to this in his famous 1946 'election speech'. Although the

<sup>9</sup> Apanasenko was deputy commander of Voronezh Army Group. He had been elected to the Central Committee in February 1941 in his capacity as commander of the Far Eastern Army Group. He spent the first two years of the war in the Far East, and died of wounds received near Belgorod after a month on the German front.

<sup>10</sup> This is in fact the only plenum between 1939 and 1953 for which an attendance list is publicly available: 'Material' plenum TsK VKP(b) (1944 g.), *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 61–5.

<sup>11</sup> Turnover for a given congress is measured as a percentage of Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected. Annual turnover rate is based on turnover percentage divided by time between congresses (measured as whole months). The problem with this 'measure' when comparing congresses separated by long intervals is that it can show only one change, and over a long period there could have been several changes.

speech was part of a comprehensive effort to defend the achievements of the Soviet system, it arguably embodied his own point of view on the elite:<sup>12</sup>

The war set something in the nature of an examination for our Soviet system, our government, our state, our Communist party, and summed up the results of their work as if telling us: here they are, your people and organizations, their deeds and days—look at them closely and reward them according to their deserts.

This is one of the positive aspects of the war.

For us, for electors, this circumstance is of great significance because it helps us quickly and objectively to assess the work of the party and of its people and draw the correct conclusions. At another time it would have been necessary to study the speeches and reports of the party's representatives, to analyse them, to compare their words with their deeds, sum up results, and so forth. This involves complex and difficult work, and there is no guarantee that no errors would be made. Matters are different now that the war is over, when the war itself has checked the work of our organizations and leaders and summed up its results. Now it is much easier for us to get at the truth and to arrive at the correct conclusions.

Between Stalin's death and the 20th Congress in 1956 there was remarkably little change in Central Committee membership. This was true despite the purge of Beria, the developing factional struggle between Khrushchev and Malenkov, and the removal of a number of ministers and regional officials from their Central Committee-level posts. By the eve of the 20th Congress the Central Committee was much as it had been in 1952. In April 1953 S. P. Ignat'ev, the former head of the Ministry of State Security, was removed as a Central Committee full member at Beria's behest, but in July he was restored, and it was Beria and his group who were to be the victims of the last Central Committee 'purge'.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile Marshal G. K. Zhukov was promoted from candidate to full member, as was N. N. Shatalin, the latter following his promotion to Central Committee secretary in March 1953. Although the 1952 party rules provided for the replacement of deceased full members with candidates, this did not become a practice—despite the death or removal of at least seven full members before the 20th Congress.<sup>14</sup> It

<sup>12</sup> I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Gos. izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1951), xvi, 4–5.

<sup>13</sup> Full member Beria was removed from the Central Committee, along with G. A. Arutinov and M. D. Bagirov, and candidates S. A. Goglidze, B. Z. Kobulov, and V. N. Merkulov. All except Arutinov were tried and shot, mostly in late 1953. Bagirov, shot as late as May 1956 (i.e. after the 20th Congress), was the last member of the Central Committee elite ever to be executed. Amy Knight cites a State Department report to the effect that Arutinov, the former Armenian first secretary, was running a state farm in 1954 (Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 215, 277, n. 57). It has recently been revealed that the police general I. I. Maslennikov, a candidate member and an erstwhile ally of Beria's, committed suicide in 1954; see Pavel Sudoplatov and Anatoli Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness—A Soviet Spymaster* (London: Little Brown, 1994), 380. Executed along with Beria was V. G. Dekanozov, who had been promoted from candidate to full CC member in 1941 but who had not been re-elected in 1952.

<sup>14</sup> The full members who died or were removed were Arutinov, Bagirov, Beria, L. Z. Mekhlis, M. F. Shkiriato, Stalin, and A. Ia. Vyshinskii.

may well have been that Stalin's successors moved very cautiously, both to display the strictest observance of Leninist norms and to keep the broader elite 'on side'. The numerous changes of elite-level posts would be registered only at the 20th Congress.

The 'mix' of job slots, the representation of different sectors of the state and party administration on the Central Committee, changed little in proportional terms between 1934, on the one hand, and 1939 and 1952 on the other (see Table 3.2). This was remarkable, given that the potential for change in the Stalinist elite had been enormous. In the longer term, over 1929–56 there was very high individual turnover (the Purges), major institutional change, and the expansion of the Central Committee. Changes to Soviet institutions between 1934 and 1939 included the reorganization of the party apparat, the expansion of the 'ministerial' (*narkomat*) system, the enhanced status of the union republics, the increase in the number of territorial units, and other changes to the state structure brought into effect by the 1936 constitution. Expansion of the Central Committee involved the addition between 1939/41 and 1952 of nearly 100 places. A broader 'Central Committee elite' had been created, and some posts that were too junior to have been represented on the smaller Central Committees of 1930, 1934, 1939, or 1941 now had CC status. Examples were the heads of relatively minor sectors of the economy (now 'branch ministries') or the party leaders of relatively minor regions.

The 'central party' category comprised mainly the Central Committee secretaries and heads of CC departments (*otdely*). There were four secretaries in 1934 and 1939. There were still only five on the eve of the 1952 congress, but no fewer than ten after it. What is notable is that representation was not greater; not even all CC department heads were members.<sup>15</sup> There was, surprisingly, a significant drop in the proportion of central *state* officials in the late Stalin years, and this was true despite the supposed 'statization' of the system and the increase in the number of ministries.<sup>16</sup> In February 1934 there had been fourteen USSR 'people's commissariats' (*narkomaty*; in effect, ministries), and four other ministry-type

<sup>15</sup> The structure of the late-Stalinist Secretariat is still obscure; it was the subject of infighting involving Stalin, Malenkov, and Zhdanov. Still a useful analysis is Werner G. Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946–53* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 198–223. See David Wells and John Miller, *A Directory of Heads and Deputy Heads of CPSU Central Committee Departments, 1952–1991* (Glasgow: Lorton Hall, 1993). Included in the 'central party' category are the heads of the Komsomol and the Cominform. The head of the political administration of the armed forces is excluded, although he could be seen as comparable to a department head.

<sup>16</sup> There are complexities within our category of 'central state'. Trade-union officials are included in this category, and there were fewer of these in 1939 than in 1934 (two rather than five). A number of officials included in our 'republic state' category in 1934 had been leaders of RSFSR ministries, and by 1939 their posts had been transformed into all-Union ('central state') ministries. On the changes of state structure in this period see John Crowfoot and Mark Harrison, 'The USSR Council of Ministers Under Late Stalinism (1945–54): Its Production Branch Composition and the Requirements of National Economy and Policy' (University of Warwick: unpublished paper, 1989).

**Table 3.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1934–1956

	1934 CC		1939 CC		1952 CC		1956 CC	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Central party	10	7	11	8	19	8	15	6
Central state	51	37	35	25	57	24	65	25
Republic party	6	4	8	6	18	8	19	7
Republic state	7	5	7	5	17	7	22	9
Regional party	36	26	38	27	59	25	83	33
Regional state	8	6	3	2	2	1	4	2
Military	10	7	20	14	26	11	18	7
Police	3	2	10	7	9	4	2	1
Diplomatic	6	4	2	1	6	2	13	5
Media/Science/Arts	2	1	4	3	11	5	9	3
Production	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	2
Unknown/Ambiguous	0	0	1	1	11	5	0	0
TOTAL	139	100	139	100	236	100	255	100

*Note:* 'Central state' excludes ministers for the armed forces, foreign affairs, and internal security; it includes central trade-union officials. 'Republic party' refers to *union* republics. 'Regions' include level of *oblast*, *krai*, ASSR, AO, and city. 'Diplomatic' includes Foreign Ministry officials and ambassadors.

state institutions, as well as five ministries in the Russian federation that had wide powers. Five years later, in March 1939, there were a total of thirty-five USSR people's commissariats, twenty-nine of which dealt with particular sectors of the economy; nearly all thirty-five were represented on the Central Committee.<sup>17</sup> There is no single reason why the number of central state officials went down in 1939, but contributing to it was the fact that fewer deputy people's commissars were on the Central Committee, and that there was a decline in central state representation outside the people's commissariats, for example from the trade unions. The number of central state officials on the Central Committee went up again in October 1952. Molotov was now 'first deputy' prime minister, under Stalin, and there were no fewer than six deputy prime ministers under Molotov. The number of what were now called USSR ministries (formerly people's commissariats) had risen again to fifty-one; forty-six of these were represented on the Central Committee, as were three 'state committees'.<sup>18</sup> But the proportion of central state officials was about the same as in 1939.

<sup>17</sup> The exceptions included the commissariats for internal trade and for procurement. There was also apparently no one at the head of the Committee of State Control.

<sup>18</sup> Ministries represented on the Central Committee in 1952 included the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry, the Navy Ministry, and three security ministries, all of which are dealt with in Table 3.2 under headings other than 'central state'. At the sub-ministerial level, the deputy minister for the Aviation Industry and the head of the Political Directorate of the Ministry of Transport (MPS) were

Republic-level representation increased somewhat, for both the party and state sides. In 1934 the USSR was made up of the Russian federation (RSFSR) and five other 'union' republics; by March 1939 it had developed into the RSFSR and ten non-Russian 'union' republics.<sup>19</sup> In 1939 the Communist Party first secretaries of the Ukrainian, Belorussian, Kazakh, and Uzbek SSRs and the three Transcaucasian republics were on the Central Committee. On the state side the Ukraine and Georgia had their prime ministers on the CC, and the RSFSR was represented by its president and prime minister.<sup>20</sup> By 1952 the Union comprised the RSFSR and no fewer than fifteen non-Russian republics (adding Karelia, the three Baltic republics, and Moldavia), and representation at union-republic level was fuller. The CC included leaders from all of them—from the party or the state side, or from both sides. Some twelve republics were represented by the first secretary of the local party Central Committee, and the Ukrainian, Uzbek, and Georgian SSRs had an additional secretary.<sup>21</sup> A further seven republics were presented by state officials, usually the local prime minister. Again, the Ukraine and Georgia had more state representation.<sup>22</sup>

Regional party representation stayed constant, while regional state representation, smaller to start with, fell. In 1934 most of the thirty-six 'regional party' officials on the Central Committee had come from the RSFSR. At that time there were twenty-three regions in the RSFSR—including *oblasts*, *krais*, and ASSRs (autonomous republics)—all of them except the Yakut and Kirgiz ASSRs represented on the Central Committee (by one or more secretaries). Five of the eight Ukrainian regions were also represented, but none of the eight sub-republic regions which existed in other parts of the USSR.<sup>23</sup> By 1939 the number of regions in the RSFSR alone had risen from twenty-three to fifty-three. Some twenty-nine

also on the Central Committee. The following ministries were apparently not represented on the Central Committee in October 1952: Automobile and Tractor Industry (MATP), Cinematography (MK), Merchant Marine (MMF), Meat and Milk Industry (MMP), and Food Industry (MPP). The Committee for Art Matters (KDI) was also not represented, and neither was the Central Statistical Administration (TsSU).

<sup>19</sup> In addition to the RSFSR and the Ukrainian, Belorussian, Uzbek, and Turkmen SSRs, the Transcaucasus Federation had been broken down into three republics, and Kazakhstan and Kirgizia had achieved union-republic status.

<sup>20</sup> In 1939 the Kirgiz SSR, the Tadzhik SSR, and the Turkmen SSR were not represented on the Central Committee on either the party or state side. By contrast, the Bashkir ASSR, a mere 'autonomous republic' within the RSFSR, was represented by its first secretary and prime minister.

<sup>21</sup> The Estonian, Karelian, and Turkmen SSRs were not represented by party leaders in 1952. Brezhnev, the Moldavian SSR first secretary, moved to the Moscow Secretariat at the 19th Congress, leaving the republic unrepresented.

<sup>22</sup> In 1952 the prime ministers of the Belorussian, Armenian, Karelian, Moldavian, Kirgiz, and Tadzhik SSRs were not Central Committee members, although O. V. Kuusinen, the Karelian *president*, was.

<sup>23</sup> Six of the 1934 'regional party' officials in Table 3.2 came in fact from towns or urban districts (*raiony*) rather than geographically larger regions. For a discussion of the implications of regional-level representation on the Central Committee see Peter Frank, 'Constructing a Classified Ranking of CPSU Provincial Committees', *British Journal of Political Science*, 4 (1974), 217–30, and Mary

of the fifty-three regions (55 per cent)—the most important ones—were represented at CC level, by thirty-three individuals.<sup>24</sup> The increase in the proportion of 'regional party' job slots between 1934 and 1939 was even greater than it appears in Table 3.2. Some autonomous republics (ASSRs), counted as 'regions' in 1934, were elevated to 'union republic' status in 1939. The absolute number of 'regional party' posts represented in the CC rose from thirty-six in 1934 to thirty-eight in 1939, and to fifty-nine in 1952. The number of Ukrainian regions doubled to sixteen by 1939, but only five of them were represented on the Central Committee (by six individuals). Although there were now twenty-five other sub-republic regions in other parts of the USSR, none were represented.<sup>25</sup> In 1952 there were even more regional party officials on the Central Committee, but their share of Central Committee membership dropped slightly. The RSFSR was now made up of sixty-six regions, and most of them were represented. In contrast—and this partly explains the relative Great Russian preponderance in the Central Committee in 1952 (see below)—there were in 1952 virtually no representatives from the regional tier of the other union (non-Russian) republics. There were now twenty-five regions in the Ukraine, sixteen in the Kazakh SSR, twelve in the Belorussian SSR, ten in the Uzbek SSR, and fifteen in the other Central Asian republics; only one had Central Committee representation.<sup>26</sup> This was especially significant in the case of the Ukrainian SSR, which had been well represented at regional level both in 1934 and 1939.

There were more substantial changes between 1934 and 1939 in military and police representation. In 1939 both groups reached the highest proportion they would ever attain in the elite, and both stayed relatively high in 1952. The Red Army high command was heavily hit at an individual level in the Purges, but representation on the Central Committee actually doubled—from ten in 1934 to twenty in 1939—in the immediate wake of the trials. The military became the third-largest category of the Central Committee elite, after the people's commissars (central state) and the regional secretaries (regional party). Although the military share dropped in proportional terms in 1952, it was still larger than after either the 1934 or 1956 congresses. No doubt this reflected the attention being paid to building up the armed forces in the tense international situation both before and after the Second World War, and the changing nature of the officer corps. In the pre-Barbarossa Central Committee about half of the army representatives had full-member status, and about half were commissars rather

McAuley, 'The Hunting of the Hierarchy: RSFSR Obkom First Secretaries and the Central Committee', *Soviet Studies*, 26: 4 (1974), 471–99. Frank and McAuley's examples are from the 1960s, but the principles are the same.

<sup>24</sup> Moscow and Leningrad regions had additional representation.

<sup>25</sup> There were in 1939 five sub-republic regions in the Belorussian SSR, three in Transcaucasia, six in the Uzbek SSR, and 11 in the Kazakh SSR.

<sup>26</sup> The exception was Lvov region in the Ukraine; the first secretary there, Z. T. Serdiuk, was a candidate member.

than commanders. In 1952, by contrast, all twenty-six were commanders, but only four had full-member status. The rise of the police officials is also extraordinary. In 1934 the police presence had been confined to three men.<sup>27</sup> The jump to ten in 1939 was a reflection of Stalin's security preoccupations, the growth of the GULAG and its economic activities, and Beria's patronage. Here too, however, there was a drop in 1952, and in no sense was there ever a police takeover of the elite. By contrast, the continuing minimal representation of the diplomatic corps is interesting, reflecting its low status. There was a proportional rise in the number of 'media/science/arts' places, but this remained a small category.<sup>28</sup>

There is another important and more general point about the job-slot system, and that was the decline of the party generalist. The elite was becoming increasingly specialized in the late 1930s. Although the situation was confused by the novelty of institutions and personnel in the late 1930s, and again by the war, there was a trend of decreasing crossover, especially between the largest career branches in the Central Committee—government ministers, territorial party secretaries, and military leaders.<sup>29</sup> Transfers from one branch to another was even less common after the war. Taking the late Stalinist elite as a group, there were only three cases of territorial party secretaries moving to state ministerial posts, and apparently no cases of change in the other direction. As for the military, in 1939 political commissars made up a substantial part of the Central Committee representation, and such figures could work equally well in civilian party administration or in the police. By 1952, by contrast, practically all the military representatives were professional soldiers. Specialization, in the case of the military, was based both on both education and experience. Specialized military education—normally attendance at least at the Frunze Military Academy—was followed by extensive experience in wartime command. The state ministers, too, tended to have appropriate technical training and experience in factories or lower levels of related ministries. The territorial party secretaries were less likely to have specialist train-

<sup>27</sup> The 1934 police officials were the heads of the USSR secret police (OGPU) and the Ukrainian branch, as well as the head of the GULAG in the Far East.

<sup>28</sup> In 1934 the only persons in the 'media/science/arts' category were the deputy director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and the director of the State Publishing House (OGIZ). The former, I. P. Tovstukha, was also a former close aide of Stalin; the latter, M. P. Tomskii, was, a disgraced 'Rightist' leader for whom OGIZ was a nominal post. The 1952 Central Committee included no fewer than six figures mainly concerned with the press, for the newspapers *Pravda*, *Za prochnyi mir*, *za narodnuu demokratiu*, and the journals *Kommunist* and *Voprosy ekonomiki*; Tumanova, head of the Pioneer department of the Komsomol, was also chief editor of *Pionerskaia pravda*. There were also two popular writers (A. A. Fadeev and K. M. Simonov), the director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy (G. F. Aleksandrov), and even two historians of the Communist movement (A. M. Pankratova and E. A. Stepanova). Simonov, who was also editor of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, believed that his election had been on Stalin's personal initiative, and presumably this may have applied to some of the others in the 'media/science/arts' category. See K. M. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia: Razmysleniia o I. V. Staline* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 208.

<sup>29</sup> This is based on an analysis of posts held at the three party meetings of 1939, 1941, and 1952, and excludes isolated changes that took place *between* meetings.

ing, although their main experience had been at this same, republic or regional, level. On the other hand, and mainly because of purges and accelerated promotions, there were similarities between one branch and another in terms of personal characteristics. The regime's officials, wherever they worked, were all about the same age. The state ministers and military leaders were overwhelmingly Great Russian. If there was less of a Russian dominance among the territorial party secretaries, this was because a number of non-Russian areas had party leaders from the local nationality. It was notable, however, that while some Russians were appointed to non-Russian territorial organizations, it was unusual for non-Russians to be in charge of ethnically Russian ones.

Several other conclusions suggest themselves about the elite and the development of the job-slot system. First of all, a rough-and-ready balance had been maintained in the late Stalin period between different categories of the elite, despite the Purges and the Second World War. The balance could have changed much more—it did in the 1920s and again in 1990. This lack of change was presumably a result of subjective and structural factors. Stalin and the Secretariat must have made decisions about the level of representation in the Central Committee of different sectors of state, party, and army officialdom. But those decisions were driven by a general growth over two remarkable decades of the complexity of the Soviet system, the increase of party saturation in the (rural) provinces, the development of the urban economy, and the fine-tuning of its 'command-administrative' system. Table 3.3 gives some indication of the change.

This increasing complexity of the Soviet system was also probably the explanation for the rapid expansion of the Central Committee in 1952. The number of full members rose from seventy-one to 125, and the number of candidate members from sixty-eight to 111, an overall increase of 70 per cent. This was, in percentage and absolute terms, much greater than the last general increase in Central Committee size, in 1927, when the number of full members increased from sixty-three to seventy-one and the number of candidates from forty-three to fifty. It was also a greater percentage increase than would ever happen again in the history of the Central Committee. The reports at the congress contain no justification for the expansion, nor was the change in size specified in the new party rules. The Politburo was expanded at the 1952 congress to thirty-six members and candidates (compared to eleven in 1939)—and its name changed to the 'Presidium',<sup>30</sup> and it has been suggested that this was part of a planned purge by Stalin of his older henchmen. But at the level of the Central Committee, given the job-slot system, it is hard to see how expansion would have facilitated a future purge. What was

<sup>30</sup> The sinister implications of the expansion of the Politburo/Presidium were noted by Khrushchev in his 1956 Secret Speech: 'O kul'te lichnosti. Doklad Pervogo sekretaria TsK KPSS N. S. Khrushcheva XX s'ezdu KPSS 25 fevralia 1956 g.', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 3, p. 164. On the other hand the expanded Presidium never actually functioned.



**Table 3.3.** Institutional expansion, 1934–1952

	1934	1939	1952
Central Committee secretaries	4	4	10
Party membership (millions)	1.8	1.5	5.8
USSR ministry-level institutions	18	35	51
Union republics	6	11	16
RSFSR regions	24	52	66
Non-RSFSR regions	18	31	62

*Note:* The years 1934, 1939, and 1952 are all years when party congresses were held; 'Central Committee secretaries' is the number *after* the given congress. Party membership is as of 1 January. 'USSR ministry-level institutions' includes peoples commissariats/ministries and state committees. 'Regions' comprises *oblast*, *krai*, and ASSR (autonomous republic).

actually happening was an extension of the job-slot principle—in other words, more posts were being made to be compatible with full (or candidate) membership of the Central Committee. Had Stalin been planning to purge the Central Committee it would have made sense to retain the conference recruitment provisions of the 1939 rules, which allowed large-scale changes between congresses (at conferences); these provisions were used in 1941, but they were discarded in 1952. The expansion of the job-slot system may well have been part of an ongoing party revival, under the aegis of Khrushchev and others below Stalin. Other signs of such a revival were the 1952 congress itself and the explicit provision in the new rules for more frequent plenums.<sup>31</sup> It is also significant that the expansion of the Central Committee did not end after Stalin's death. The 1956 CC would be larger even than the 1952 CC (6 per cent more full members and 10 per cent more candidates).<sup>32</sup> The 1952 congress was the beginning of a steady trend, lasting until 1990, for each Central Committee to be larger than its predecessor; the 1986 CC would have no fewer than 307 full members and 170 candidate members. This expansion took place under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev, and it was not carried out for purposes of purging. Quite probably the same factors caused expansion before and after 1953. The most satisfactory explanation would seem to be that the growth of the Central Committee reflected the changing size and complexity of the state, the party, and the economy. This growth was also an attempt to satisfy competing factions by widening job-slot representation.

<sup>31</sup> On the party revival see Gorlizki, 'Party Revivalism'.

<sup>32</sup> The mid-1950s expansion of the Central Committee was in contrast to what happened with the Presidium/Politburo. The Presidium was expanded to 25 full members at the October 1952 plenum, reduced immediately after Stalin's death, and then kept down to 11 full members after the 1956 congress.

It has already been suggested that the Purges were followed not simply by replacements for existing leaders, but by the emergence a new type of leader. These were Stalin's 'young cadres', but they have been given a number of other names: in Russian the *vydvizhentsy* or *novobrantzy*, in English the class of '38, the Brezhnev generation, even 'Stalin yuppies'.<sup>33</sup> Whether or not the new generation was as dominant as is sometimes suggested (see below), it had a very strong presence in the Central Committee elite in 1939/41 and a numerical preponderance in 1952. The most remarkable changes was generational. Taking the Central Committee as a group, the median year of birth in 1934 was 1891, while in 1939 it was 1900. Even more surprising, thirteen years later, in 1952, the median year of birth was still only 1904, and in 1956 it would be only 1905. Evidently, once the new generation had arrived the change of age profile began to slow down. In fact, however, the group as a whole needs to be broken down for the generational change to be understood. Taking the elite as two broad generations, with the first generation being those born before 1901, and the second generation those born between 1901 and 1920, there is a remarkable divide (see Table 3.4). As was shown in the previous chapter, the 1934 Central Committee had included virtually no second-generation leaders; by contrast, two-thirds of those who served on the Central Committee in the 1939–52 period were born after 1900, and the proportion is even higher if the 'survivors' of 1934 are left out. On the other hand, it is important to remember that the late Stalinist elite did include a large number of leaders from the older generation, and reflected what Malenkov called in 1939 the 'Stalinist line on the combining and uniting of old and young'; this formulation was repeated by Pegov at the 19th Congress in 1952.<sup>34</sup>

Year of birth is different from age. As a group the 'old guard', the early Stalinists, had actually been *younger* in 1934 than the elite of 1952 (median age 43 as opposed to 48), although the 1939 cohort were younger than both, with a median age of 39. Year of birth related to life experiences, and entry into the party was a particularly significant 'life experience' (see Table 3.5). The median year of entry for the early Stalinist elite had been 1912; for the late Stalinist elite it was 1926. In 1934—and as late as 1937—all of the Central Committee elite had joined the party before the end of the Civil War and two-thirds were 'undergrounders' (*podpol'shchiki*, pre-1917 party members). For the late Stalinist elite, by contrast,

<sup>33</sup> John A. Armstrong, *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite* (London: Atlantic Books, 1959), 26 ('men of '38'); Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 248, 257–60 ('Stalin yuppies').

<sup>34</sup> *XVIII s"ezd*, 149; *Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6. Pegov was head of the Credentials Committee at the 19th Congress. In May 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev would say exactly the same thing about combination of the old and new: 'The main thing is skilfully to combine . . . experienced and young cadres. That is the most reliable guarantee against inertness and stagnation, and also against adventurism and voluntarism'; see M. S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1987), ii. 222.

**Table 3.4.** Generational breakdown of CC members, 1939–1952

Year of birth	1934 CC	1939 CC	1952 CC	1939–52	1956 CC
Pre-1891	67	22	9	25	5
1891–5	48	16	18	26	13
1896–1900	21	28	35	53	26
First generation	136	66	62	104	44
1901–5	3	52	77	112	76
1906–10	0	12	69	76	89
1911–20	0	0	20	20	36
Second generation	3	64	166	208	201
1921–40	0	0	1	1	2
Third generation	0	0	1	1	2
Unknown	0	0	7	15	8
TOTAL	139	139	236	328	255

*Note:* First generation born before 1900, second generation born 1901–20, third generation born 1921–40. The 1934, 1939, and 1952 columns correspond to party congresses. The ‘1939–52’ column, the sum total of the ‘late Stalinists’, includes 19 new members who joined the CC at the 1941 conference. Individuals who were elected to CC more than once in 1939, 1941, and 1952 are counted only once in this column.

**Table 3.5.** Year of party entry of CC members, 1934–1956

	1934 CC	1939 CC	1952 CC	1939–52	1956 CC
Pre-1917	95	24	10	25	9
1917	23	8	9	12	5
1918–20	21	46	40	70	30
1921–3	0	3	8	12	8
1924–6	0	34	44	64	42
1927–32	0	24	82	102	93
1933–7	0	0	3	3	1
1938–40	0	0	28	28	52
After 1940	0	0	11	11	15
Unknown	0	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	139	139	236	328	255

*Note:* The 1934, 1939, and 1952 columns correspond to party congresses. ‘1939–52’ column includes 19 new members who joined CC at the 1941 conference. Individuals who were elected to the CC more than once in 1939, 1941, and 1952 are counted only once in this column. The individual whose year of party entry is unknown was V. N. Pavlov, Stalin’s interpreter.

only a third had joined the party before the end of the Civil War, and fewer than a tenth were undergrounders.

Year of birth and party entry, taken together, lead to a clearer understanding of generational change, as well as the Purges and High Stalinism as a whole. As Table 3.5 shows, members of the late Stalinist elite possessed a wide range of party experience. Some had joined before the Revolution and some a quarter of a century later, when recruitment resumed after the Purges. It is true that the greater part of the early Stalinist elite had been wiped out, and the undergrounder survivors were a handful of Stalin's closest cronies. As we saw in Chapter 2, however, there were a remarkable number of 'survivors' who had joined the party between February 1917 and the end of the Civil War. A third of the late Stalinist elite were still members of our first generation, and these included many very senior officials. At the other end of the spectrum, much has been made, following Trotsky, of the 'Lenin levy' (*leninskii prizyv*), the mass recruitment into the party in 1924, immediately following Lenin's death. This was supposed to have flooded the party with members of a lower quality and led to the later 'degeneration' of the party (and the defeat of the Trotsky faction). This influx may well have been an important factor among the party rank and file at a crucial time in the Lenin succession struggle. It was not, however, so important at the level of the Central Committee elite. Only thirty-nine of the 328 people in the new Stalinist elite joined the Communist Party in 1924 or 1925, the years of the Lenin levy.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, a large and important group were those who joined the party in the recruitment drive which coincided with industrialization and collectivization. This group was numerically much more important than the Lenin levy both in the elite and the party as a whole; the number of 'full' party members (as opposed to candidate members) grew from 790,000 in January 1927 to 2,200,000 in January 1933, a net average increase of 235,000 a year over six years, compared to a one-off 200,000 for the Lenin levy.<sup>36</sup>

For the second generation of the elite common age led to common experiences. The first generation had been affected by the first of four defining moments in the history of Soviet Russia, the 'heroic' era of the Revolution and Civil War. The second generation were products of the other three, the 1st Five Year Plan, the Purges, and the Great Fatherland War. As the poet Konstantin Simonov (b. 1915) put it, 'we were a pre-war [*predvoennaia*] generation, we knew that war was in front of us', whether with the encircling capitalists, a coalition of border states, Japan, or Germany.<sup>37</sup> The second generation were on balance beneficiaries of the Purges.

<sup>35</sup> This contradicts T. P. Korzhikhina and Iu. Iu. Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovlenie, mekhanizmy deistviia', *Voprosy istorii*, 1993, no. 7, p. 34, where it is suggested that the members of the 1939 Central Committee entered the party mostly in 1924.

<sup>36</sup> T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917-1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 52.

<sup>37</sup> Simonov, *Glazami*, 63. Simonov was a CC candidate member from 1952 to 1956.

Although they often had friends, colleagues, and relatives who suffered 'repression', this evidently did not shake their confidence in the Soviet system or even in Joseph Stalin. No doubt in part this came also from exposure to the ideologically charged decade of the 1930s, and it has been suggested that Stalin valued the new elite over the old precisely because it had internalized the blinkered mentality of the *Short Course* and accepted the necessity of repression.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, the undeniable achievements of the 'plan' and the war—the transformation of the Russian economy, the victory over Nazi Germany, in general, the transformation of the USSR into a superpower—made the command-administrative system and Stalin's personal leadership things in which the new generation had great confidence.

The elite was to a substantial degree 'Russianized' after 1937–8. Among the revolutionary elite, the seventy-eight members of the Central Committees who served from 1917 through 1923, only 49 per cent were Russian. For the early Stalinist elite the Russian proportion was 58 per cent. Even at the end of the pre-Purges period, the Central Committee elected in 1934, Russians made up only 54 per cent.<sup>39</sup> The big jump came with the new Stalinist elite—including members of both the first and second generations—where the proportion of Russians appears to have increased to about 75 per cent: there were 194 Great Russians among 265 Central Committee members whose nationality is known (out of a total of 328).<sup>40</sup> The Great Russian proportion was about the same for the 1939 and 1952 Central Committees. Later on the Russian proportion fell, but not back to pre-Purges level: the post-Stalin elite was to be 67 per cent Russian.<sup>41</sup> To some extent the job-slot system determined the proportions. As has been mentioned, the 1939 and 1952 Central Committees had a number of representatives from the sub-republic level in the RSFSR, but very few from that level in the non-Russian republics. The higher representation of the army high command, which was largely Russian, also shifted the balance away from the minorities, as did the fact that commissars/-

<sup>38</sup> Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power, 1928–1941: The Revolution from Above* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 526–30, 545–50. On the psychology of an authoritarian elite see also Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors: Leadership, Stability, and Change in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 41–6.

<sup>39</sup> The Great Russian fractions, based on those whose nationality is definitely known, are: 1917–23, 38/78 (78); 1923–37 (old Stalinist elite), 94/163 (187); 1934, 72/133 (139). The figure in brackets after the actual denominator is the *ideal* denominator, the total size of the group in question, including unknowns.

<sup>40</sup> Nationality is a difficult characteristic to investigate for the Soviet-era elite, and particularly difficult for the late Stalinist period—the nationality of a third of the elite is still unknown. For the elite of the 1920s and 1930s there was information in the party archive (RTsKhIDNI). For the elite of the 1960s and later nationality is given in the Supreme Soviet handbooks (*Deputy Verkhovnogo soveta*), and many Central Committee members were also Supreme Soviet deputies. Unfortunately these handbooks were not published for the 1937, 1946, 1950, and 1954 memberships (*sozvyzy*).

<sup>41</sup> The post-Stalin elite are the 948 individuals elected to the Central Committee in 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, and 1981. The precise Russian proportion was 570/851 (948) and includes a number of individuals who had also been in the late Stalinist elite.

ministers and regional party leaders tended to be Russian, rather than members of one of the minorities.

For ethnic groups the greatest drop in 1939 was among the Jews and Latvians, and there was another striking drop for the Jews between 1939 and 1952. Jews had formed 15 per cent of the old Stalinist elite, at least twenty-five individuals. Although many of these perished in the Purges, as a group the *initial* Jewish survival rate was higher than for the CC as a whole. There were still eleven Jews in the 1939 Central Committee but only three in 1952: L. M. Kaganovich, L. Z. Mekhlis, and B. L. Vannikov. This was partly a result of the anti-Semitic campaigns of Stalin's later years, but the Jews never recovered their position after Stalin's death, and they made up less than 1 per cent of the post-Stalin elite.<sup>42</sup>

John Armstrong wrote about the 'men' of 1938, and although this now seems old-fashioned, it is not inappropriate. The 328 members of the late Stalinist elite were overwhelmingly males. Only eleven (3.4 per cent) were women,<sup>43</sup> although the proportion of women among the early Stalinist elite had actually been lower, at 2.5 per cent of the Central Committee (6/236). In the post-Stalin elite the pattern was repeated: the forty-one women made up only 4.3 per cent of the total, and it was as high as this only because a number of women, exemplary dairymaids and the like, were co-opted onto the Central Committee; they were 'token members' rather than participants in the elite job-slot system.

The social composition of the late Stalinist elite is difficult to determine exactly, but it clearly had a large plebeian element. About 60 per cent of the late Stalinist elite came from a rural background, which reversed the position in the early Stalinist elite, where 40 per cent had had a rural background. In the late Stalinist elite there was little difference in this respect between those born before or after 1901 (i.e. even the survivors of the first generation tended to be from a rural background). Rural domination continued also in the post-Stalin elite, where, even with an admixture of third-generation leaders, born between 1921 and 1940, very nearly 60 per cent were still from the countryside. This is perhaps not a surprising

<sup>42</sup> The Jewish fraction of the late Stalinist post-elite was 6/851 (948).

<sup>43</sup> The 11 women in the late Stalinist elite were E. A. Furtseva, M. D. Kovrigina, K. S. Kuznetsova, L. P. Lykova, K. I. Nikolaeva, A. M. Pankratova, M. M. Pidtychenko, E. A. Stepanova, Z. P. Tumanova, R. S. Zemliachka, and P. S. Zhemchuzhina. The proportion of women CC members was lower even than the proportion of women at the next level, among party congress delegates. In 1934 Ezhov's announcement that 89 women were voting delegates, or 7.2%, was met by a protest from the floor: 'Too few, too few!'; see *XVII s"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 304. In 1939 the percentage was still only 7.2% of voting delegates, although it rose to 12.3% in 1952 (*XVIII s"ezd*, 149; *Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6). At the 1956 congress women voting delegates made up 14.2%, and the Credentials Committee *rapporteur* (A. B. Aristov) took several local organizations to task by name for their failure to include a sufficient number of women; see *XX s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 14–25 fevralia 1956 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956), i. 238f. Women's representation in the Communist Party as a whole changed over time, declining from 16.5% in 1934 to 14.5% in 1939, but rising to 19.2% by 1952; it remained at about that level throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Rigby, *Membership*, 360f.).

finding given that 80 to 85 per cent of the population of the late Russian Empire had lived in villages, but is striking in the elite of a 'proletarian' party.<sup>44</sup>

Several important qualifications need to be made. First of all, the information currently available about social origins is far from perfect. For example, information on place of birth is not available for 20 per cent of the new Stalinist elite, and one can only make the working assumption that they followed the pattern of the other 80 per cent. Secondly, the fact that an individual was born in a village does not necessarily make him or her a peasant, or even the child of a peasant. A number would be children of rural artisans, teachers or technicians, or even of estate managers or members of the gentry. In addition, such was the level of internal migration by the beginning of the new century that many of the peasant children who grew up to serve in the Soviet elite had fathers and mothers who worked at least part of the year in the towns; as young teenagers they themselves might well have joined their parents. It would probably be fair to say that relatively few of the late Stalinist elite had done much farm-work as adults, but they were products of a rural milieu. Finally, whatever conclusions might be reached about the effect of having in the late Stalinist elite such a large rural element, there was also a quite substantial minority (40 per cent) of such people in the *early* Stalinist elite (especially among those who joined the party after the underground period, i.e. in 1917–20). Of course, the village-born members of this earlier elite had grown up in the villages of late Imperial Russia rather than those of the early NEP.

Of the remaining members of the late Stalinist elite a high proportion were apparently children of manual workers. If about 60 per cent came from a rural background, it is probably the case that a further 20 to 25 per cent came from a manual-worker background and about 10 per cent from an undetermined urban background. The late Stalinist elite were certainly not the offspring of a hereditary metropolitan proletariat; only eight of the 224 whose place of birth is known were born in St Petersburg and only six in Moscow.

Although some information is lacking, the overall profile is clear, and Zhdanov was probably correct in the main when he said in 1939 that the 'Soviet intelligentsia is made up of yesterday's workers and peasants and the sons of workers and

<sup>44</sup> The rural fractions are: old Stalinist elite, 81/191 (236); new Stalinist elite, 159/268 (328); post-Stalin elite, 465/805 (948). For the new Stalinist elite as a whole the corresponding proportion is thus 59% (159/268); for the two-thirds of the new Stalinist elite who were born after 1900 (208 individuals) the proportion was 60% 102/170 (208); In each case the rural element is based mainly on those known to have been born in a rural locality, with the addition of a few whose place of birth was unknown but whose fathers had a rural occupation. The urban population is determined in the same way, i.e. mainly those known to have been born in a city or town, with the addition of a few whose fathers had an urban occupation. The remainder are treated as unknown. This method has obvious shortcomings, but official data on social origin are very incomplete. For political reasons, what is available, even in primary sources, is suspect. For a convenient English-language summary of the general population see Frank Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects* (Geneva: League of Nations, 1945), 31 f.

peasants, who have been promoted to posts of command',<sup>45</sup> although he might have reversed the order to 'peasants and workers'. The domination of the late Stalinist elite by plebeian elements, especially the peasantry, has been assessed in different ways. T. P. Korzhikhina and Iu. Iu. Figatner, comparing the 1924 and 1939 Central Committees, found that the new people were 'offspring of families of illiterate peasants and unskilled marginal workers with a corresponding psychology, traditions, habits, and *Weltanschauung*'. The Leninists had entered the party from conviction; the Stalinists 'had been through the selection process of the *nomenklatura* system which had already begun to operate and [they] had wound up in the upper reaches of the structure of government thanks to the fact that their psychology and *Weltanschauung* were what Stalin wanted of cadres'. Unlike the independent thinkers of the underground generation, the Stalinists were characterized by 'a psychology of submission to authority and its "directives", inculcated in the paternalistic structure of a indigent Russian peasantry disfigured by Tsarist autocracy'. By 1939 'the share sharply grew of those extracted from the peasants, the low-qualified employees, and the military, whose experience was bound up with the tradition of cruel and unthinking paternalist-bureaucratic subordination . . . No one knows better how to put the yoke on than a slave.' In the second half of the 1920s *the party as a whole* was transformed 'from a party of the workers and the intelligentsia to a party of the peasantry, more exactly—above all into a party of marginals'. Massive death and destruction were wrought by this 'marginal peasantry' led by the '*nomenklatura* which sprang from it, imitating all the experience of the autocratic state administration'.<sup>46</sup> In the West, Robert Daniels came to a similar conclusion. 'The young activists whom Stalin had recruited from the working class and peasantry, poorly educated . . . brought with them into every branch of the Soviet bureaucratic hierarchy the worst attitudes of the old Russian political culture . . .' They were 'authoritarian, anti-intellectual, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic', and a "fusion" of the self-protective culture of the

<sup>45</sup> *XVIII s"ezd*, 667.

<sup>46</sup> Korzhikhina and Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura', 31–4, 37. Korzhikhina and Figatner attempted to analyse the change from the 'Leninist stage' to the 'Stalinist stage' by comparing the Central Committee of 1924 with that of 1939. Among other things they found that the proportion of members from a peasant background rose by 150%, while those from what they described as the *raznochintsy* intelligentsia halved (the *raznochintsy* is a traditional social category, separate from the predominant noble and peasant classes). Unfortunately it is not clear exactly which 'population' the authors are referring to in their article. They mention the Central Committees elected in 1924, 1939, 1966, 1976, and 1986 and a total of '918 members [918 *chlenov*] of the CC'. In fact 664 *individuals* were full members of those five Central Committees (many being elected to the CC at more than one congress), and 1,093 *individuals* were full or candidate members. Neither figure corresponds to 918. But if the authors considered each election to produce a separate 'member' then the total is 913 *full* members (i.e. 53 full members in 1924 plus 71 full members in 1939, etc.) which, allowing for a typographical error, might have been resulted in the figure '918'. In addition, some of Korzhikhina and Figatner's proportions probably refer just to those where details are known, not the whole, but this is not made clear in their article.



Russian village and the quasi-paranoid but pragmatic political culture of the Russian bureaucracy'.<sup>47</sup>

In a more neutral vein, Edward Keenan saw a traditional and 'normal' Muscovite political culture returning. Late Stalinism was a 'restabilization', and the most important element contributing to this was:

the new political elite that emerged by the end of the 'thirties [which] was dominated by individuals of proletarian or peasant background, whose political culture was formed on the basis of . . . village political culture, and strongly reinforced by the experience of the chaotic and risk-laden environment in which they had risen to power. . . .

[T]he groups who at the beginning of the century and until the 'thirties had exerted destabilizing . . . influences on political culture . . . were in one way or another removed from the equation of political culture. And to a large extent their places in the society were taken by peasants or by the sons of peasants . . . And while these newcomers learned the skills required to fill these new roles, they did not cast aside the attitudes—the view of the world and of man—that they brought with them to their new positions. Indeed, they prospered in politics precisely because they practised the traditional habits of risk-avoidance and the subjection of the individual will and impulse . . . to the interests of the group.<sup>48</sup>

Another influential work, by Vera Dunham, based the late Stalinist elite on a rather different social grouping, the *meshchanstvo* or urban lower middle class. Stalin 'had to build on something already existing . . . Meshchanstvo gave him that foundation. The men of power under Stalin were meshchane, one and all, brought up from the bottom: the stakhanovite, the officer, the manager, the scientist'.<sup>49</sup>

The city had shaped the bolsheviks with its universities, Putilovsk works, freedoms, secret police, agonies and anonymity. Stalin's men, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly peasant in origin. Their development led from their early socialisation in the village to intermediary training in small provincial towns, the main domain of old meshchanstvo. When,

<sup>47</sup> Robert V. Daniels, *Is Russian Reformable? Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1988), 78. Moshe Lewin made similar negative comments about the 'observable collective psychology of peasants' based on their existence at 'an earlier stage in the history of civilisation'. The peasants were both perpetually on the edge of economic catastrophe and participants in a seasonal lifestyle in which 'long periods of . . . inactivity . . . had to be followed by outbursts of feverish activity'. As a result, 'the same process that produced caution and conservatism also contributed to a preponderance of personality types which tended to be easily irritable, easy to provoke, and ready to explode, human beings who were sanguine-tempered rather than phlegmatic and cold-blooded'. See *The Making of the Soviet System* (London: Methuen, 1985), 52–4.

<sup>48</sup> Edward L. Keenan, 'Muscovite Political Folkways', *Russian Review*, 45: 2 (1986), 169. Keenan saw 'troublesome' westernized elements being replaced by 'peasants or by sons of peasants'. In contrast to the negative features stressed by Daniels, Keenan noted the positive side of the political culture of the Russian village: 'a strong tendency to maintain stability and a kind of closed equilibrium; risk avoidance; suppression of individual initiatives; informality of political power; the considerable freedom of action and expression "within the group"; the striving for unanimous final resolution of potentially divisive issues' (p. 128).

<sup>49</sup> Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press; 2nd edn., 1990), 19–20, 131, 133, 245, 257, n. 19.

thereafter, they were pulled into positions of power, they enacted a blend of the old and the new.

Dunham was talking about the whole elite, not just the membership of the Central Committee. She was also actually focusing on the culture of this elite and the relationship between this culture and a supposed 'Big Deal' made with the Stalinist leadership after 1945. Although in many respects Dunham's book is very stimulating, it is not on its own of much help in understanding the late Stalinist elite. 'Meshchanstvo' as a term is no more precise than the Marxist 'petty-bourgeoisie'. There is more than a little circular reasoning here, and the argument confuses a social grouping (urban lower middle class) with a state of mind (middle-class materialism).<sup>50</sup>

All these contradictory conclusions show the limitations of the 'political culture' approach, and the pitfalls of thinking backwards from an outcome—be it the Purges or Brezhnevite stagnation—to its supposed social origins. Elements of this approach are useful, but they are far from telling the whole story. In any event, '[y]esterday's workers and peasants and the sons of workers and peasants' had still to be transformed through the educational system.

Limitations of information make it difficult to be precise about the education of the late Stalinist elite, but it is certainly an important subject. The educational system was the pathway for plebeian recruits into the governing elite. Some historians have argued that the apparent success of educational initiatives explains Stalin's readiness to purge the earlier, less well-educated, elite. Others have stressed, either in a positive or a negative sense, the relationship of Soviet education to the development process.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the pattern for the revolutionary elite had been mixed, with a quarter achieving only a basic education, and the remainder divided more or less evenly between those who had experience only of secondary education and those who had spent some time in higher education. The pattern in the early Stalinist elite was generally similar, but educational achievement was probably lower. Although still made up of members of the first generation, the elite in this period included many men and women who had reached maturity just before the First World War. Those who might have gone on to higher levels of education were unable to do so because of war, revolution, and civil war. After that they been appointed, in their twenties and thirties, to responsible posts in the new Soviet system; their duties gave them neither time nor inclination to gain new educational qualifications.

<sup>50</sup> In his introduction to the 1976 edition of *In Stalin's Time* Jerry Hough made the point that the Big Deal occurred in the 1930s rather than the 1940s (p. xxviii). A more sophisticated introduction than Dunham's to the lower middle class is Daniel Orlovsky, 'The Lower Middle Strata in Revolutionary Russia', in Edith W. Clowes *et al.* (eds.), *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 248–68. In Orlovsky's view the important influence of the 'lower middle strata' dates back to 1917.

The educational pattern for the second generation—and consequently for most of the late Stalinist elite—would be quite different. Sheila Fitzpatrick has produced the best studies of the education of what has been called the ‘Brezhnev generation’. She was mainly interested in a narrow portion of the new elite, whom she identified by the term ‘*vydvizhentsy*’ (the ‘promoted ones’).<sup>51</sup> These were specifically people who entered higher education, normally higher *technical* education, in 1928–32, during the ‘Cultural Revolution’. Two processes took place simultaneously, the influx of working-class youth (probably village-born) into higher education, and a concentration there on engineering (rather than, say, law or political science). Fitzpatrick argues that this educational pattern suited the background of the upwardly mobile workers as much as the demands of the regime. Most famous were the ‘thousanders’, individuals benefiting from organized recruitment by the central authorities and trade unions and sent to engineering, agriculture, education, and military institutes, with the emphasis now on very rapid education, in keeping with the tempo of the Five Year Plan. The caveat to Fitzpatrick’s analysis is that it is far from true that all members of second generation, in the late Stalinist or post-Stalin elites, were *vydvizhentsy* in her sense. In fact Fitzpatrick found that only twenty out of 139 Central Committee members and candidates in 1939 and forty-five out of 125 full members in 1952 could be described as *vydvizhentsy*.<sup>52</sup> Another indication of this comes from looking at the next level of the elite, the delegates to the party congresses; Table 3.6 gives the reported breakdown. Of the 1,192 voting delegates in 1952, 709 (59 per cent) claimed to have completed higher education, but only 282 of these had engineering degrees, that is, only 24 per cent of all voting delegates. No branch of higher education was given for 215 of the 709.<sup>53</sup> Many of them were probably graduates of military academies, but it is possible that party ‘higher education’ may have been counted (see below).<sup>54</sup>

The second generation, born in 1901–20, were exposed to minimal primary education under the Old Regime before being plunged into the turmoil of war,

<sup>51</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Sheila Fitzpatrick, ‘Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928–1939’, *Slavic Review*, 38: 3 (1979), 178 f. The term *vydvizhenets* (singular) is useful, but confusing, as it can also mean a favourite or protégé of an individual.

<sup>52</sup> Fitzpatrick, ‘Stalin and the Making of a New Elite’, 178 f.

<sup>53</sup> *Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Korzhikhina and Figatner, ‘Sovetskaia nomenklatura’, 34, acknowledged that a high proportion of the 1939 Central Committee had a higher education—according to their figures 80% in 1939, compared to 20% in 1924. They argued, however, that these ‘qualifications’ had a bogus character. The Stalinists’ education, moreover, excluded law, which Korzhikhina and Figatner felt was essential for a properly functioning developed country. See, in contrast, Fitzpatrick’s comment that whatever the faults of its educational expansion ‘the Soviet Union did avoid a pitfall of other developing nations . . . over-production of lawyers’ (*Education*, 204 f.). However one evaluates the value of the legal profession, it was certainly under-represented. Of the voting delegates to the 1952 congress who had completed higher education only 1%—seven individuals—had law degrees (*Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6).

**Table 3.6.** Education of party congress delegates, 1934–1956 (%)

	1934	1939	1952	1956
Higher	10	26	59	56
Higher (incomplete)	—	5	7	9
Secondary	31	22	19	12
Primary/Incomplete secondary	59	46	15	23
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

*Note:* Figures are for highest level of education attained. The 1934 'Primary/Incomplete secondary' figure was not given in the source but has been calculated by subtracting the known figures from 100 per cent.

*Sources:* *XVII s"ezd*, p. 304; *XVIII s"ezd*, p. 148; *Pravda*, 9 Oct. 1952, p. 6; *XX s"ezd*, p. 237.

manual labour, or the low-level state or party bureaucracy. As 'mature students' in the 1920s they benefited from the access to higher education provided to workers and Communists. The famous *rabfak* (workers faculty) provided a bridge to higher qualifications. The number of students in institutions of higher education, general (*VUZy*) and technical (*VTUZy*), rose from 160,000 in the 1927/8 session to 470,000 in 1932/3.<sup>55</sup>

Opinions vary about the value of this education. Fitzpatrick, Hough, and Bailes were, at least to a degree, impressed by what was achieved. For critics like Korzhikhina, Figatner, or Daniels the early Soviet system of secondary and higher education did little more than scratch the surface. Certainly the process was far from ideal. This elite generation for the most part received a secondary or tertiary education, but it was a poor one, it was highly rushed (and often incomplete), and the schools and *VUZy* were in a state of organizational confusion, with some of their best teachers purged. The manner of the educational expansion has fairly been described by Fitzpatrick as 'reckless and extravagant'.<sup>56</sup> One source, Loren Graham, argued that narrowly trained engineers were in fact a root cause of the general failure of the Soviet system:

[E]ngineering students in the Soviet Union received a stunted and narrow education; it was intellectually impoverished, politically tendentious, socially unaware, and ethically lame. . . . [M]ost of the leading political figures of the latter-day Soviet Union shared this educational background. In their new positions of power these ill-informed technocrats helped to determine the very mode of life of their fellow citizens.

Specifically, they had an unthinking belief that the biggest enterprises were best and 'knew precious little about economics and cost-benefits analysis, not to mention sociology and human psychology'. It was this elite which explained in part 'why the Soviet Union failed to become a modern industrialised country', and

<sup>55</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Education*, 188.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

indeed why 'it collapsed so strikingly easily'.<sup>57</sup> To this one might add Kendall Bailes's analysis of the post-war technical intelligentsia, which suggests that the best trained stayed in production and academic life—rather than moving into politics.<sup>58</sup>

Combining social origin and education, historians have come to varying conclusions about the new elite. After 1991 Robert Daniels made them responsible for the collapse of Communism:

The young activists whom Stalin had recruited from the working class and peasantry, poorly educated . . . brought with them into every branch of the Soviet bureaucratic hierarchy the worst attitudes of the old Russian political culture . . . This Stalinist elite was by nature profoundly at odds with the experts and intellectuals whom the elite needed to make their system function. The instincts of the elite were to hide behind Marxist dogma, pile on controls, and stifle any initiative that might threaten their own status.

By contrast, Sheila Fitzpatrick emphasized the functional side of the general shift of 1939, providing a class of leaders who were both 'Red' and 'expert'. The *vydvizhentsy* are the heroes of several of her books—'highly motivated, hard-working and serious in their attitude to education'.<sup>59</sup> The difference is partly one of interpretation, and partly the result of scholars looking at different ends of remarkably long career paths.

Another form of education for the elite was the system of party schools established in 1946 at the height of the party revival overseen by Zhdanov and A. A. Kuznetsov. The Central Committee resolution which created them began by noting that the training of 'leading party and state workers' was unsatisfactory. The most important element in the system, both for the late Stalinist elite and for later entrants to the Central Committee, was the Higher Party School (*Vysshaia partiinaia shkola*, or *VPSb*), in Moscow. The school was to run three-year courses, intended for senior officials aged up to 40, who were party or state leaders at republican or regional level. There were also nine-month 'top-up' (*perepodgotovka*) courses for those already in place as secretaries and department heads of party committees in republics, regions, and major towns, at a comparable level in state bodies, and also for the editors of major newspapers.<sup>60</sup> Students were sup-

<sup>57</sup> Loren Graham, *The Ghost of the Executed Engineer: Technology and the Fall of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. xi, 73 f., 102. Graham noted that the share of Politburo members with technical education rose from 59% to 89% between 1956 and 1986.

<sup>58</sup> Kendall Bailes, *Technology and Society Under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917–1941* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 413 f., 431–41.

<sup>59</sup> Robert V. Daniels, *The End of the Communist Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993), 71; Fitzpatrick, *Education*, 252.

<sup>60</sup> The Higher Party School was to have an annual intake of 300 for the three-year courses, and 600 for the 'top-up' course. The CC decree of 2 August 1946 is in *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov Tsk*, 9th edn. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1985), viii. 39–48. The Higher Party School was set up under the auspices of the Cadres Administration (*Upravlenie kadrov*), which Kuznetsov had headed since April (Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 26). Party education is also

posed to have completed at least a secondary education. Party history and dialectical and historical materialism made up only a small part of the three-year course, which also included Soviet and world history, Russian language and literature, a foreign language, and practical training relevant to a speciality.<sup>61</sup> A dozen or so member of the 1952 Central Committee are known to have attended the Higher Party School, and it became more important for later CC entrants. The best-known of the dozen attendees was Ekaterina Furtseva, later Khrushchev's Minister of Culture, who entered the Central Committee in 1952 in her capacity as Moscow city second secretary. Furtseva completed the school in 1948 (aged 38), evidently while still holding the post of second secretary of Moscow's Frunze borough party committee. She had risen from the shop floor in a provincial textile factory via a factory school (*FZU*) and the Komsomol. Her first degree had been from the Moscow Institute of Fibre Chemical Technology (*tonkoi khimicheskoi tekhnologii*), a course she had begun in her late twenties and completed in 1941.

## Stalinists

The Purge did not, then, create something uniformly new, although the profile of the new Stalinist elite was quite different from that of the old Stalinist elite. Three Central Committee members might be taken as representative of 'types' in the elite under later Stalinism: A. A. Andreev, N. S. Baibakov, and N. K. Patolichev. The first was a 'survivor', and the other two were examples of the 'new men', Baibakov a technocrat and Patolichev a party generalist.

Andrei Andreev's career has been traced in Chapter 1 and 2, from village boyhood through the purges. He was elected to the Central Committee both in 1939 and 1952, and venerated as a 'veteran' Stalinist, although he was only 43 at the time of the 1939 congress. Andreev was then one of a small group of leaders around Stalin. There were only a few officials whom Stalin telephoned directly, rather than having his secretary place the call; Andreev was one of them. He was a Central Committee secretary from 1935 to 1946, and in 1939 the other three

discussed in N. S. Patolichev, *Sovest'iu svoei ne postupis'* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995), 31 f. The predecessor of the Higher Party School, the 'Higher School for Party Organisers', ('attached to the Central Committee'), appears to have had little impact. An earlier 'Higher Party School attached to the Central Committee' had evidently been created in 1939 but was transformed into the 1946 Academy of Social Sciences. In 1978 the Higher Party School was merged into the Academy of Social Sciences; the Academy had been established at the same time as the Higher Party School to train party theoreticians and teachers through a two-year postgraduate programme.

The Higher Party School was only the most important part of a system laid down in 1946. Comparable two-year party schools (*partiinye shkoly*) for more junior leaders were established in a number of provincial urban centres.

<sup>61</sup> The scheme laid out in the original decree envisaged 2,600 hours of training. On the basis of a 46-week annual session, this meant an average of 19 hours a week for all subjects. It including only 200 hours of 'dialectical and historical materialism', compared to 300 hours of a foreign language and 350 hours on 'fundamentals of the Soviet economy and practical leadership of economic sectors'.

secretaries were Stalin, Malenkov, and Zhdanov. From 1943 to 1946 he served as Commissar for Agriculture, and from 1946 to 1953 as a deputy prime minister—when a major area of his work appears to have been agriculture. Andreev was also a full member of the Politburo (1932–52) and the Orgburo (1939–46), and chairman of the Commission for Party Control.<sup>62</sup> His post as chairman of the Council of the Union of the Supreme Soviet was largely formal, but it was indicative of his prestige.

Andreev was not, however, one of the innermost circle after the late 1930s. He was not a member of the 1941–5 State Defence Committee (GKO). His position remained weak after the war, and towards the end of Stalin's life Andreev went into a real eclipse. He was not re-elected to the party Orgburo in March 1946. Although in June 1946 Andreev was elected a member of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers, he was not made head of one of the Council's eight functional bureaux when they were created later in the year; Malenkov himself was now responsible for agriculture. Andreev may have been blamed for the poor state of the sector, as revealed in the drought and famine in 1946.<sup>63</sup> He evidently still had some residual responsibility for agriculture in the Council of Ministers, as Khrushchev—then Central Committee secretary in charge of agriculture—publicly humiliated him over details of farm labour. On the other hand, Khrushchev revealed in the Secret Speech that Stalin 'separated [Andreev] from the work of the Politburo'. (Sidelineing his older colleagues, Khrushchev noted, was 'one of the most unbridled acts of wilfulness'.<sup>64</sup>) Andreev's position was possibly affected by the fact that his wife, Dora Khazan, was Jewish; this was the time of Stalin's anti-Semitic campaign.<sup>65</sup> His decline perhaps had a more prosaic explanation—the onset of total deafness. By the end of the war Andreev found it very hard to follow the deliberations in top-level meetings, a task not helped by Stalin's habit of speaking softly and pacing around the room. Kalinin made surreptitious notes for him, but the 'all-union village elder' died in 1946. Beria, in contrast, made jokes at Andreev's expense.<sup>66</sup> In any event, Andreev was not elected even to the enlarged party Presidium (Politburo) in October 1952.

<sup>62</sup> According to a recent authoritative source Andreev was chairman of the Commission of Party Control, and Shkiriakov was deputy chairman ('Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS partii—Politbiuro (Prezidiuma), Orgbiuro, Sekretariata TsK (1919–1990 gg.)', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 7, pp. 83, 133). It appears, however, that it was Shkiriakov who in 1949 handled the case of Voznesenskii ('O tak nazyvaiemom "Leningradskom dele"', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 2 (1989), 130).

<sup>63</sup> Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 29.

<sup>64</sup> Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti', 163 f. Apparently Stalin said at the October 1952 plenum that Andreev was no longer capable of active work (Simonov, *Glazami*, 215).

<sup>65</sup> Louis Rapoport, *Stalin's War Against the Jews: The Doctors' Plot and the Soviet Solution* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 208.

<sup>66</sup> V. D. Uspenskii, *Shkoly budushchego: Povest' ob Andree Andreeve* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988), 376; Malyshev commented at the 1953 plenum on Beria's jokes about Andreev's disability ('Delo Beria: Plenum TsK KPSS—2–7 iuliia 1953 g. Stenograficheskii otchet', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 2, p. 205).

When the first post-Stalin Council of Ministers was reconstituted under Malenkov in 1953 Andreev was no longer a deputy prime minister. His only post was that of member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, although he would be re-elected to the Central Committee in 1956. His swansong was the July 1953 plenum; he was sufficiently important to be one of the twenty-four speakers, but his criticism of Beria was in terms of being *insufficiently Stalinist*.<sup>67</sup> Although only 57 years old—and with eighteen more years to live—his career was effectively over. While some of the old guard—like Molotov and Voroshilov—temporarily improved their position after Stalin's death, Andreev did not. Politically he was a liability; he had clashed with Khrushchev, the rising star, over agriculture, and he may also have been too much of an unreconstructable Stalinist. Ill-health was a factor—in addition to his deafness he had also developed a serious heart condition.<sup>68</sup> The former hotel porter passed out of effective political life, along with the other survivors of the first generation.

If in terms of the 1950s Andreev represented 'yesterday's men', the superseded first generation, Nikolai Semenovich Patolichev and Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov represented today's and tomorrow's. The former joined the Central Committee in 1939, and the latter in 1952. They are both figures about whom a relative wealth of personal and career detail is available.<sup>69</sup> N. S. Patolichev would have a long and varied party and state career, but in 1939, when first elected to the Central Committee, he was first secretary of an important industrial region, Iaroslavl'. Between 1938 and 1950 he moved back and forth between the central party apparat and regional party secretarial posts in Iaroslavl', Cheliabinsk, and Rostov; in 1950–6 he served as first secretary in Belorussia. N. K. Baibakov was more of a technical specialist, and was elected to the Central Committee in his capacity as Minister of the Oil Industry. Although this was only in 1952, he had held the Central Committee-level oil-industry post since 1944 (and would hold it until 1955). Both men reached elite posts in their early thirties, both retired as septuagenarians. Each held reasonably important posts under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Patolichev as Minister of Foreign Trade (1958–85) and Baibakov as head of Gosplan (1957–8, 1965–85).

Patolichev and Baibakov were second-generation leaders, and the background of the two men was typical of their cohort—and different from what had gone before. Both reached adulthood under Soviet rule, and both came from a plebeian

<sup>67</sup> Andreev's extraordinary speech to the July 1953 plenum is in 'Delo Beriia', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 2, pp. 182–6.

<sup>68</sup> According to Andreev's daughter he suffered an aneurism (*infarkt*) (A. A. Andreev, *Vospominaniia, pis'ma* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), 314f).

<sup>69</sup> Both men—unusually—produced memoirs: N. S. Patolichev, *Ispytanie na zrelost'* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1977) and *Sovest'iu svoei ne postupis'* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995); N. K. Baibakov, *Delo zbizni* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1984), *Sorok let v pravitel'stve* (Moscow: Respublika, 1993), and *Ot Stalina do El'tsina* (Moscow: GazOil Press, 1998). Baibakov was also interviewed for the Soviet Elite Project.





3.1 Nikolai Patolichev, pictured  
in 1970 (Novosti)

background. Patolichev was 13 when the Civil War ended in 1921, and Baibakov was 10. Patolichev's father had been a professional cavalry NCO in the Imperial Army, but came from a Russian peasant family, inhabitants of a village about 75 miles west of Nizhnii Novgorod. Patolichev's father and mother died during the Civil War, the former in the Red Cavalry and the latter of typhus, and Nikolai grew up to age 16 with relatives in his village. He received little formal education. In late 1924, after some youthful farm-work, he found employment, like his brothers and sisters, in the nearby Sverdlov chemical factory in Rastiapino (from 1929 Dzerzhinsk). Baibakov's parents were among those of the Tsar's subjects who found work far from home. They moved from Belorussia to Azerbaidzhan and the Baku oilfields, then one of the fastest-growing parts of the Empire's economy. The Baibakovs settled in well, and Nikolai Baibakov, born in 1911, would always regard Azerbaidzhan as his home. His father worked as a blacksmith (*kuznets*) for the Nobel firm. As an oil-worker family the Baibakovs were relatively well off, but the two parents and seven surviving children lived in a two-room flat.

Baibakov had a fairly straightforward education, perhaps because he grew up on the outskirts of major city. He graduated from the Azerbaidzhan Petroleum Insti-

tute in Baku in 1932 at age 21. From there he went directly out to the oilfields as an engineer. Patolichev, in contrast, was a product of the mass-education campaigns of the 'Cultural Revolution'. Alongside his work as a machine-minder (*apparatchik*), Patolichev was admitted to the factory's part-time school (FZU) in the mid-1920s. His first extraordinary jump was to the Second Moscow Chemical-Technological Institute in late 1931, from which he progressed to the Military Chemical Academy. His admission must have been based on native intelligence, but also on a number of other factors. His father had been killed in action in the Soviet-Polish War; he had been a brigade commander in one of the most favoured formations of the Red Army, Budennyi's First Cavalry Army. His elder brother was another Civil War hero, and later a secret police official. Nikolai Patolichev himself was a political activist, admitted to the party at the young age of 20 (in 1928), and an active Komsomol leader. He had been Komsomol secretary of the Sverdlov Factory, and then of the Dzerzhinsk district of Nizhnii Novgorod region. He had been sent to the Urals as an agitator in 1930 and was involved in the collectivization campaign there.

For both men the late 1930s were a decisive period. In Patolichev's case he came to the attention of the Central Committee Secretariat in extraordinary circumstances—at least if his memoirs can be believed. Having finished his course at the Military Chemical Academy (where he again headed the Komsomol organization), Patolichev was posted to the staff of the Red Army's 'Moscow Proletarian Division'. When, at the beginning of 1938, the division commander came under suspicion Patolichev appealed directly and in person to the Central Committee. He made such a good impression that he was invited by none other than Andrei Andreev, then Central Committee secretary for cadres, to serve in the CC apparatus as a Responsible Organizer (*Instruktor*). (Andreev was a figure whom Patolichev always regarded with great respect and affection.) After this extraordinary development—Patolichev recalled it as 'thunder on a clear day'—he was assigned as Party Organizer (*Partorg*) to the Iaroslavl' Rubber Combine. Located north-west of Moscow, this was a flagship plant of Stalinist industrialization and a key tyre-producer. The factory administration had been ravaged by the Purges. Under Patolichev's tutelage—he was not yet 30—production was rapidly increased, and both the plant and Patolichev won the Order of Lenin (for him the first of eight). After this five-month stint he was appointed, in January 1939, to be first secretary of Iaroslavl' region. This meteoric rise was not directly the result of the Purges, as the 'old' first secretary—Shakhurin—was moving sideways to be first secretary in Gor'kii region; Shakhurin in any event had only become first secretary at the end of April 1938—and *he* had been only 34.<sup>70</sup> The Purges did play their part, however. Iaroslavl' region was formed in the late 1930s from the

<sup>70</sup> See A. I. Shakhurin, *Krylia pobedy* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury; 3rd edn, 1990), 43–50.

northern part of Ivanovo region. The first secretary of Ivanovo from 1932 to 1937 had been the Old Bolshevik (and Central Committee member) I. P. Nosov, born twenty years before Patolichev. Nosov was arrested in August 1937 and shot the same year; Shakhurin, and then Patolichev, were his replacements. In any event, and fortunately for Patolichev, the factories and collective farms of Iaroslavl' fulfilled their plans in the race to prepare for war, and at the 18th Party Conference in February 1941 Patolichev was one of four candidate members of the Central Committee to be promoted to full membership.

Baibakov's rise was also remarkable. He decided to do his army service in 1935–7 partly to escape the arrests which the oilfield engineers were already suffering. After he returned from the Far East he advanced rapidly, presumably in the wake of the Purges, and became manager of the Leninneft' Trust. Like Patolichev in Iaroslavl', Baibakov over-fulfilled his production quota; he came to the attention of Bagirov, the Azerbaidzhan first secretary, and of Kaganovich, the 'Iron Commissar' of Heavy Industry. Kaganovich ordered Baibakov in late 1938 to take charge of the so-called 'Second Baku', four oil-trusts located between the Volga and the Urals; he was not yet 27. Kaganovich, now People's Commissar of the Fuel Industry, moved Baibakov's office from Kuibyshev (Samara) to Moscow; in February 1940 Baibakov became Deputy People's Commissar of the Fuel Industry, and in July 1940 First Deputy. At no point was he consulted about his new posts. Baibakov was always more of a technical specialist than a party figure. Although as a student he had been secretary of his department's Komsomol cell, it was only in 1939, after his successes as an economic manager, that he was admitted to the party. He was, as a result, not even a delegate to the 18th Party Congress in 1939.

It was a time of constant if challenging work, with little time for private life. Baibakov met his future wife, Klavdiia Andreevna, when she brought a document to him. She was a graduate of an engineering-economic institute and a young adviser to the deputy People's Commissar for Construction. Baibakov liked what he saw and on the spot invited her out to the cinema. After a few meetings he proposed in the restaurant of the Metropol' Hotel, giving his intended half-an-hour to consider. The marriage was registered the following day, but Baibakov was late for the reception—he was held up by a meeting with Kaganovich. The marriage, arranged at Stalinist tempo, lasted forty-three years.<sup>71</sup>

The Purges were important for the accelerated promotion of both these products of the Cultural Revolution, but the Nazi invasion also had a great impact. Patolichev and Baibakov both occupied key positions in the war effort. At the end of December 1941 Patolichev was transferred to a region even more important than Iaroslavl', Cheliabinsk. Before the evacuation Cheliabinsk had been a relative backwater; now it was a key centre for evacuated factories in the Urals. As first secretary of Cheliabinsk region Patolichev was a vitally important party executive,

<sup>71</sup> The story is an entertaining one; for the best version see Baibakov, *Ot Stalina*, 51–5.

responsible for a large share of the production of steel and motors, aircraft, tanks, and vehicles for the Red Army. All this was done while he was still a young man; in June 1945, when he attended the victory parade in Red Square, he was only 36. Marshal Zhukov singled out Patolichev for praise in his memoirs: Nikolai Semenovich was '[a] man of great energy, of great organizational abilities'; '[h]is indefatigability in fulfilling the objectives laid down by the party was frequently noted by the government and was used by Stalin as an example to others'.<sup>72</sup> Baibakov, meanwhile, worked as deputy commissar of the Petroleum Industry, under I. K. Sedin. Sedin was a party generalist, on the pattern of Patolichev. Sedin's experience was in the textile industry, and he had been the young post-Purge first secretary in Tambov and Ivanovo; he knew little about the oil industry. It is interesting that the apparat kept one of 'their' people in charge throughout the critical part of the war; Baibakov described Sedin as a Malenkov protégé and appears to have had a fairly low opinion of him.<sup>73</sup> Only in November 1944 did Baibakov himself become people's commissar.

The post-war years brought differing patterns. Baibakov, a specialist, stayed on in the Commissariat (later Ministry) of Petroleum until 1955. He was, however, a featured speaker at the 1952 party congress, and also one of the favoured leaders called upon to condemn Beria at the July 1953 plenum. His roots were in the Caucasus, and Beria had supervised the petroleum industry there; Baibakov's criticism mainly concerned Beria's inefficient administrative methods (he was presumably also at pains to escape the charge of being a Beria protégé).<sup>74</sup> He would be promoted to important economic posts under Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

Patolichev's post-war career was much more varied, with extraordinary ups and downs. After the war, at the March 1946 Central Committee plenum, he was appointed to the Orgburo, and in April he was made head of the Organization-Instruction Department of the Central Committee. In May 1946, at a meeting with Stalin, Zhdanov, and Kuznetsov, he replaced Malenkov as Central Committee secretary, the change evidently being confirmed by a 'correspondence ballot' of the Central Committee.<sup>75</sup> Patolichev only lasted for twelve months, until May 1947, when Suslov replaced him as secretary. In the late 1940s the consolidation of control over the western borderlands was a high priority. Patolichev was moved

<sup>72</sup> G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmysleniia* (Moscow: APN, 10-e izd., 1990), ii. 48.

<sup>73</sup> I. K. Sedin (1906–72) is an example of a 'man of '38' who failed. Despite his wartime post and the position of people's commissar/minister of the Textile Industry in 1945–8, he was not re-elected to the Central Committee in 1952.

<sup>74</sup> 'Delo Beriia', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 2, pp. 189–92.

<sup>75</sup> Patolichev, *Ispytanie*, 280–4; despite this Andrei Malenkov has described Patolichev—at least in 1952—as one of his father's 'protégés'; see Andrei Malenkov, *O moem otse Georgii Malenkov* (Moscow: NTs Tekhnecos, 1992), 58. This view was shared by Khrushchev's biographer: William J. Tompson, *Khrushchev: A Political Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 93. Werner Hahn, however, describes Patolichev as an 'Andreevite' working against Malenkov (*Postwar Soviet Politics*, 40–2). In his posthumous memoirs—possibly prepared for publication in the Brezhnev era—Patolichev shows great respect for Andreev but mentions Malenkov only in negative terms.

in 1947 to be a secretary in the Ukraine under Kaganovich, who had arrived there as first secretary two months earlier. As with his pre-war assignment, the red envelope with his posting to the Ukraine came without any warning. Patolichev found it impossible to work with Kaganovich, and he asked to be relieved of his post. In any event, from the Ukraine Patolichev was in effect demoted to be first secretary in a region of secondary importance, Rostov. He recovered from this 'exile' in 1950, with another surprise appointment. In one of the intervals of a Supreme Soviet meeting Stalin called him in and asked if he wanted to be first secretary of the Belorussian SSR; Patolichev agreed ('Gotov, tovarishch Stalin—otvetil ia'). In the late Stalin years it was not unusual to appoint ethnic Russians to leading posts in the non-Russian republics; Patolichev's task was to raise local agricultural production. At the 1952 Congress Patolichev made one of the main speeches and was elected once again to the Central Committee; more than that, he was briefly elected to the enlarged Central Committee executive, the Presidium.

After Stalin's death Patolichev's career stagnated. He survived an attempt by Beria (playing the nationalist card) to replace him in Minsk in late June 1953, but in the end he fell out with Khrushchev. Khrushchev and Patolichev apparently had an angry exchange of words over agriculture at the January 1955 plenum—what Patolichev later called his 'swansong'. He was replaced by the ethnic Belorussian Mazurov and made a dramatic shift out of his 'element', *partiinaia rabota* (party work), becoming in July 1956 first deputy minister of Foreign Affairs (the same post as that held by Krestinskii); his final jump was to minister of Foreign Trade in 1958.<sup>76</sup> Three years before he actually left his Belorussian post Patolichev had been forced to publicly defend himself at a heated plenum of the Belorussian Central Committee. His words probably sum up the attitude of many of his cohort:<sup>77</sup> 'I came to Belorussia by the will of the party, and I am leaving by the will of the party. For the past three years I have spared no effort and have worked as a Communist should. So will I remain to the end of my life, so will I act wherever our great Communist Party sends me.'

Both Patolichev and Baibakov, like their generation of the elite, became believers in discipline. As Stalin told Baibakov, a successful people's commissar required 'nerves of a bull' (*bich'i nervy*) plus optimism. The same was true for Stalin's regional party secretaries. They appear to have been 'Stalinists' until the end of their days. The second volume of Patolichev's memoirs, which appeared in 1995, contains virtually no criticism of Stalin. 'Yes,' he said, speaking of 1946, 'our

<sup>76</sup> Although the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods will be dealt with in later chapters it is worth considering Patolichev's career in those years. For nearly 30 years after 1958 he stayed in an honourable—but secondary—elite post. The most likely explanation is that he had run foul of Khrushchev in the 1940s. Baibakov, for his part, was evidently valued by Khrushchev and Brezhnev as a 'neutral' technician'. Although he was never in the Politburo he was an important official—for better or worse—in the Soviet economy.

<sup>77</sup> A. Lukashuk, 'Zharkoe leto 53-go', *Kommunist Belorussii*, 8 (1990), 74 f. Patolichev's dismissal was overturned by Beria's fall the following month.



3.2 Nikolai Baibakov, pictured in 1970 (Novosti)

generation of party workers, having undergone a test of maturity in the years of the Great Fatherland War, were now to a large degree responsible for the fate of the Motherland and the people.’ The octogenarian Baibakov emerges in a 1992 interview as an unreconstructed Stalinist and advocate of the production ethic.<sup>78</sup>

They often ask me: how was it that we won the war when Hitler was at the gates of Moscow and reached Leningrad. . . . I consider that it was the result of great discipline. Stalin was a very good organizer. He can’t be excused for the many innocent people who perished. But two other men were guilty above all, Beria and Kaganovich. . . . From the point of view of general leadership, of course, Stalin played a huge role. . . . In the the 1st and 2nd Five Year Plans the national income grew 15 per cent a year. No other country in the world has ever done anything like that. . . . It demanded great effort, how the people worked—it is hard to imagine! Now they criticize the Stakhanov movement, but what an idea that was! We knew what we were striving for . . .

I do not know how it was, but I was never afraid that they would repress me, arrest me. I believed in the victory of socialism. . . . We made it so the British and Americans began to

<sup>78</sup> Patolichev’s second volume of memoirs came out in 1995 but was actually written in the mid-1980s. N. K. Baibakov interview, 1992, Soviet Elite Project.

fear us. Because they saw the mad tempo we achieved, they saw our industrial potential, our military potential . . .

Baibakov said much the same thing in his post-Communist memoirs when posing the question of whom it was more interesting to work for, Stalin or Khrushchev. 'I say honestly and openly: for Stalin. It was more difficult, but more interesting. This was so, above all, because there was fierce executive discipline and decisions were binding, there were no excuses and delays, there was no glut of paperwork.' He explicitly denied being a Stalinist but, significantly, could see no alternative to Stalin and his policies.<sup>79</sup>

## The Central Committee in Eclipse

The period 1939–53 was the nadir of the Central Committee as a functioning organization, and this shortcoming would be a major theme in Khrushchev's Secret Speech of 1956:

During Lenin's lifetime party congresses took place. At every sharp turning-point in the development of the Party and the country, Lenin considered it above all necessary that there be wide discussion in the Party of the fundamental questions of internal and external policy, of party and state structure. . . .

Between congresses the Central Committee of the Party acted as the most authoritative collective of leaders, [and] strictly observed the principles of the Party and carried through its policy. . . .

If during the first few years after Lenin's death party congresses and Central Committee plenums took place more or less regularly, later, when Stalin began increasingly to abuse his power, these principles were brutally violated. This was especially evident during the last decade and a half of his life. . . .

Plenums of the Central Committee were hardly ever called.

Even the members of the Politburo were, according to Khrushchev, subject to Stalin's whims; 'meetings of the Politburo occurred only from time to time', and decisions were made by informal subcommittees.<sup>80</sup> Given this situation of the late 1940s and early 1950s, it is interesting that the real power of the 'Presidium' (as the Politburo was renamed in 1952–66) was explicitly recognized for the first time in the 1952 rules; it existed 'for leadership of the work of the Central Committee between plenums'.<sup>81</sup>

The very long interval between congresses and the small number of Central Committee plenums were the most striking ways in which the formal party rules

<sup>79</sup> Baibakov, *Sorok let*, 212 f., 242. Baibakov's accounts of personal dealings with Stalin are positive (e.g. pp. 47–5).

<sup>80</sup> Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti', 136, 163 f.

<sup>81</sup> This was in contrast to the situation the 1939 rules. In these, as in previous versions, it was just said that the Central Committee 'organizes a Political bureau for political work'. The Orgburo, formally elected by the Central Committee alongside the Politburo since 1919, was dropped from the 1952 rules, its functions evidently taken over by the Secretariat.

were ignored. Although there were congresses at lower levels, no all-union party congress was held in the early post-war years. It may well have been that Stalin was reluctant to share his power. Two attempts were made to call a congress, but—according to an April 1964 account—Stalin said he needed more time to prepare his report.<sup>82</sup> There is a strong argument that postponement also suited those in the top elite who were temporarily out of Stalin's favour. On the other hand, Zhdanov, who was in favour, was in January–February 1947 making active preparations for a 19th Congress, which was evidently to be held in the winter of 1947–8. The draft agenda included approval of a new party programme and rules—as well as confirmation of the post-war elite. There was also talk of preceding this with a 19th *Conference*.<sup>83</sup> This was opposed by those, like Malenkov and Molotov, who feared a consolidation of the Zhdanov ascendancy, and they were able to block open discussion.<sup>84</sup> Zhdanov's death in August 1948 put paid to the whole project for over four years, until October 1952.

According to the 1939 rules Central Committee plenums were to be held at least once every four months. This meant that the elite should have assembled over fifty times between the spring of 1939 and the autumn of 1952. In fact they met on less than a dozen occasions, as shown in Table 3.7. The 1952 rules were more 'realistic' and envisaged a plenum every six months, although the longer interval may have been partly explained by the increased size of the Central Committee. In any event, the intention was still to hold reasonably frequent plenums.

A plenum was arranged for October 1941, when the German army approached Moscow, but although many members assembled no meeting took place.<sup>85</sup> The January 1944 plenum considered minor issues: the creation at union-republic level of a Commissariat of Defence and a Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, the nomination of Shvernik to be first deputy chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (under Kalinin), and approval of a new national anthem.<sup>86</sup> The March 1946 plenum dealt with the forthcoming session of the Supreme Soviet and with personnel changes in the apparat.<sup>87</sup> The February 1947 plenum was the only

<sup>82</sup> *Pravda*, 28 Apr. 1964. Solzhenitsyn gives an account of two party members who received long sentences for complaining that in light of the party rules a congress was long overdue: A. Solzhenitsyn, *Arkhipelag Gulag 1918–1956. Opyt kbudozhbestvennogo issledovaniia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1974), *chast'* 3–4, p. 293.

<sup>83</sup> Aksenov, 'Put', 113. The 1939 party rules specified *at least* one conference a year.

<sup>84</sup> Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 29. Of course, the fact that Malenkov and Molotov got their way also shows Stalin's strength. The draft programme was prepared in July 1947 (Aksenov, 'Put', 112 f.).

<sup>85</sup> It has recently been suggested that the October 1941 plenum was summoned to consider a separate peace; see Bernd Bonwetsch, 'Stalin, the Red Army, and the "Great Patriotic War"', in M. Lewin and I. Kershaw (eds.), *Stalin and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 191.

<sup>86</sup> 'Materialy plenuma . . . (1944 g.)', 61–5. This plenum was originally scheduled for 10 October 1943. It was put off at the last minute, ostensibly because too many personnel were involved at the front.

<sup>87</sup> Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 25. According to Aksenov ('Put', 112), the March 1946 plenum also agreed to the preparation of a new party programme.



**Table 3.7.** CC plenums, 1938–1956

1938	Jan.	11–20	
1939	Jan.	11	
	Mar.	22	At end of 18th Congress
	May	21–7	
1940	Mar.	26–8	
	July	29–31	
1941	Feb.	21	At end of 18th Conference
	May	5	Shcherbakov appointed CC Secretary
1944	Jan.	27	Ministerial reorganization
1946	Mar.	11, 14, 18	Malenkov and Beria to Politburo; Orgburo re-elected
1947	Feb.	21–2, 24, 26	Passes resolution on agriculture
1952	Aug.	15	Announces 19th Congress
	Oct.	16	At end of 19th Congress
1953	Mar.	5	With Council of Ministers and Presidium of Supreme Soviet
	Mar.	14	Malenkov resigns as CC Secretary
	July	2–7	Beria denounced; ‘Leninist’ norms restored
	Sept.	3–7	On agriculture; Khrushchev made CC First Secretary
1954	Feb.	23–Mar. 2	On agriculture
	June	21–24	On agriculture
1955	Jan.	25–31	On agriculture/livestock; Malenkov criticized
	Mar.	3–8	On agriculture; Shatalin removed as CC Secretary
	July	4–12	On economy; agriculture; Yugoslavia; personnel changes in Presidium and Secretariat; 20th congress announced
1956	Feb.	13	On Report to 20th Congress
	Feb.	27	At end of 20th Congress

*Note:* New details of Stalin-era plenums are given in *Biulleten' rasseyedennykh dokumentov federal'nykh gosudarstvennykh arkhivov i tsentrov khraneniia dokumentatsii* (Moscow: n.p., 1998).

one to have a published resolution, a lengthy one entitled ‘On Measures for Improving Agriculture in the Post-War Period’; this was evidently in response to the drought and famine of 1946–7. The plenum also approved Stalin’s giving up the post of minister of Defence.<sup>88</sup>

If the late Stalin period was a time of possible ‘party revival’, why were plenums not called even at the intervals of the late 1930s? One explanation—the ‘totalitarian’ one—would be that Stalin no longer had any need to convince the party elite, as he had had to do as recently as 1936–7. Another interpretation would put Stalin in a weaker position: his ignoring of the party rules might have been the result of a residual fear of what the party elite could do. This was especially true if the

<sup>88</sup> KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh, viii. 98–145, I. M. Volkov, ‘Zasukha, golod 1946–1947 godov’, *Istoriia SSSR*, 1991, no. 4, p. 17; Aksenov, ‘Apogeiia’, 101.

notion is accepted of a 'party revival', under Zhdanov in 1946–8 and possibly under Khrushchev in 1952.<sup>89</sup> The inbuilt trend towards—at least—oligarchy (or 'collective leadership') was a substantial one, which would have threatened the unique position Stalin had built for himself and would have reduced his freedom of action in policy and personnel decisions. Under this thinking the August 1952 plenum would be an especially important one. Not only did it come after a break of no less than thirty-one months since the last plenum, it also set the date for the 19th Congress.<sup>90</sup>

In any event, the situation had clearly changed with Stalin's removal from the scene in early March 1953; there was no need to wait until 1956 and official de-Stalinization. After Stalin's stroke, but before his death, the new leadership summoned an expanded plenum, an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers, and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; 95 per cent of those present were Central Committee members.<sup>91</sup> The plenum only lasted forty minutes and approved quite a complicated list of personnel and administrative changes. The next plenum, held on 14 March 1953, made further important top-level personnel changes but made no policy decisions.<sup>92</sup> At the following plenum,

<sup>89</sup> William McCagg suggests that such a revival goes back to 1943; see *Stalin Embattled, 1943–1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978). Werner Hahn and Gavriel D. Ra'anani, in contrast, stress the period of Zhdanov's ascendancy; see Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics*, and Ra'anani, *International Policy Formation in the USSR* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1983). One recent Russian source takes quite a different view of Zhdanov, rejecting the notion of his radicalism and portraying him as simply a workaholic executor of Stalin's will: see V. Zubok and C. Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 112–16. The argument for a Khrushchev 'Revivalism' in the late Stalin years has been best documented by Gorlizki, 'Party Revivalism'.

<sup>90</sup> Aksenov, 'Apogee', 103; the decision to call a congress was taken by the Politburo in December 1951 (Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 38).

<sup>91</sup> 'Posledniaia "otstavka" Stalina', *Istochnik*, 1994, no. 1, pp. 106–11. There is still some confusion about the exact time of Stalin's death, but according to the official version it was 9:50 p.m. on Thursday evening, 5 March, nearly two hours after the plenum began. At the plenum Khrushchev stated that Stalin was still alive, and it is hard to see why he would have lied about this. Only 12 of 231 people in attendance were not members of the Central Committee. The meeting had opened at 8:00 p.m. The high proportion of the CC who were there, 118 of 125 full members and 101 of 111 candidates, means they must have been summoned soon after the leadership became aware of Stalin's condition (in the early hours of Monday morning) and certainly before the public announcement on Wednesday morning of his critical condition.

Of 125 full members elected the previous October L. Z. Mekhlis had died, Stalin was ill, and Bulganin was the Presidium member on duty at his bedside, so only four full members were absent without explanation: F. S. Goriachev, M. B. Mitin, S. I. Muratov, and A. Ia. Vyshinskii. Missing candidates were G. V. Aleksenko, S. Z. Borisov, V. I. Chuiikov, A. A. Gromyko, B. Z. Kobulov, A. S. Paniushkin, S. M. Shtemenko, L. N. Solov'ev, S. K. Toka, and G. N. Zarubin. In nearly all cases absences can be explained by difficulties in getting to Moscow; the absentees were based in regions in the USSR remote from Moscow or were abroad on diplomatic or military duties.

<sup>92</sup> At the 14 March plenum Malenkov left his post as CC secretary, and a Secretariat of five was elected (including Khrushchev and four others who had already been elected to the Secretariat, either on 16 October 1952 or on 6 March 1953). In April S. P. Ignat'ev was removed as secretary by correspondence ballot ('Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov TsK', 77).

in July 1953—devoted mainly to discrediting Beria—speakers both from the Presidium and the rank-and-file leadership stressed the importance of the ‘Leninist-Stalinist [*leninskii-stalinskii*] Central Committee’. In his opening speech Malenkov, now prime minister, mentioned the need, first of all, ‘immediately to put right the regular working of the plenum of the CC’. He also said that ‘in our Central Committee are represented the party’s best people, who possess invaluable experience in all areas of the building of Communism’. ‘You see, comrades,’ he emphasized in his closing speech, ‘that we in complete openness put before the plenum questions concerning the situation in the highest echelons of the party leadership.’<sup>93</sup> Khrushchev, too, called for regular businesslike plenums, and Molotov blamed Beria for the lack of regular plenums, but it was Malenkov whose comments were most the hard-hitting.<sup>94</sup>

We all have in our memory the following event. After the [1952] party congress comrade Stalin came to the plenum of the Central Committee in its present membership and without any basis politically discredited comrades Molotov and Mikoian.

Did all of us in the CC plenum agree with this? No. But we were all silent. Why? Because the cult of personality had reached an extreme point and was fully out of control. Do we want anything like this in the future? The answer is clear—no. (*Voice: That’s right. Stormy applause.*)

The protocol of the meeting of the July 1953 meeting was secret until 1991. The resolution which followed it, however, was circulated to party committees. It noted that the ignoring of Leninist norms had led ‘to a debasement of the role of the CC as the organ of the collective leadership of the party’, and called for ‘the strict observance of the requirement of the rules of the CPSU concerning the timing of party congresses, CC plenums, regular work of all central and local party organs’.<sup>95</sup> The Central Committee now became a source of legitimacy, and the plenum something of a forum in which different factions in the leadership could bid for support and attempt to mobilize the elite, and the party in general, for the achievement of particular objectives.

Plenums were held with the frequency required by the 1952 rules, but it was Khrushchev, the leading Central Committee secretary, rather than prime minister Malenkov who was increasingly identified with the restoration of ‘Leninist norms’. Indeed, this ‘legality’ became a banner of the emerging new leader. It was significant that most of plenums were concerned with agriculture, an issue for which Khrushchev had responsibility (see details in Table 3.7); especially striking

<sup>93</sup> ‘Delo Beriia’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, pp. 147, 149; no. 2, p. 195. Malenkov was less tactful than Khrushchev. When he stressed that ‘[o]ur Central Committee has . . . a leading core’ Malenkov displayed an arrogance that antagonized the party barons; such an arrogance contributed to his ouster with the ‘anti-party group’ four years later.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Delo Beriia’, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1991, no. 1, pp. 159f., 166; no. 2, p. 196.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 203.

was the launching of the 'Virgin Lands' campaign.<sup>96</sup> After the 1956 congress plenums would take on an even more important role.

However infrequently the Central Committee met in plenary session in the late Stalin period, its powers were formally the same as in all the versions of the rules since 1917. The Central Committee 'guides all the work of the party', it 'organizes the various institutions of the party and guides their activities', and it 'directs the work of the central and soviet and public institutions through party groups in them' (1939 and 1952 rules). But since the Central Committee met very rarely, especially in 1941–52, these great powers were even more abstract in their implementation than they were at other times. If the Central Committee guided events it was either indirectly, especially through its Politburo and Secretariat, or through the actions of its members as individual executives. There would be no collective role for the Central Committee until after 1953.

Among the greatest 'paper' powers of the Central Committee was control over elite personnel. This included the right to elect its own executive organs, the Politburo/Presidium, the Orgburo (in 1939), and the Secretariat. It also included the power, with a two-thirds majority, to dismiss full members and candidates from the Central Committee.<sup>97</sup> Given this, meetings of the Central Committee would naturally be expected before such personnel changes, and this did sometimes happen. There was a comprehensive re-election of the Orgburo at the March 1946 plenum. The February 1947 plenum apparently elected Voznesenskii to be a full member of the Politburo. But more informal meetings were the norm, and followed logically from the lack of plenums. The February 1941 and March 1946 plenums dealt with elections to the Politburo, but evidently to *confirm* changes that had already taken place. In fact, the majority of 'elections' and demotions in 1946–9 were carried out by means of the infamous 'correspondence ballot' (used to such effect in the 1937–8 Purges) or without any Central Committee involvement at all.<sup>98</sup> Marshal Zhukov and A. I. Shakhurin, commissar for the Aviation Industry, were both removed from the Central Committee in 1946

<sup>96</sup> See the discussion of this in Tompson, *Khrushchev*, 134f. and Mark Kramer, 'Declassified Materials from CPSU Central Committee Plenums: Sources, Context, Highlights', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 10 (March 1998), 7–25.

<sup>97</sup> The procedure laid out in the 1934 rules for dealing with inadequate Central Committee members was more or less repeated in those of 1939, i.e. the two-thirds vote of a plenum was required (it was not, however, specified in 1952 that members of the Committee for Party Control should attend). The two-thirds vote provision was essentially repeated in the 1952 rules, and it was added that an expelled full member should automatically (*avtomaticheski*) be replaced by a candidate.

<sup>98</sup> 'Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov TsK', 76. In March 1946 15 people were elected to the Orgburo; five had been in the 1939 Orgburo and 10 were new. It is not clear whether Voznesenskii's 1947 election to the Politburo was by correspondence ballot, but there may actually have been a meeting. Other elections to the Politburo are specifically described as being by correspondence ballot (those of Bulganin and Kosygin in, respectively, February and September 1948); Voznesenskii's election was not so described.

The 1941 plenum confirmed the election of Politburo candidates Voznesenskii, Malenkov, and

without a formal plenum, and the latter was put on trial.<sup>99</sup> Although there was nominally a plenum in January 1949 at the time Lozovskii was removed from the Central Committee (and A. A. Kuznetsov was removed from the Secretariat), it seems likely that what took place was a correspondence ballot.<sup>100</sup> N. A. Voznesenskii, A. A. Kuznetsov, and M. I. Rodionov were removed from the Politburo or the Orgburo by correspondence ballot prior to their arrest and execution as part of the 'Leningrad Case'. Six months later, in September 1949, Voznesenskii was removed from the Central Committee by correspondence ballot; this was a month before his arrest.<sup>101</sup>

The early post-Stalin leadership paid more attention to the rules—and to the broader elite—when making personnel changes. The three plenums held in March and July 1953 were essentially held to ratify top-level personnel changes in the Presidium and Secretariat, and most changes at that level in the following two and half years were carried out through plenums. S. P. Ignat'ev, a threat to Beria, was removed by correspondence ballot in April 1953, but that was before the official stress on Leninist norms; Ignat'ev was restored to the Central Committee at the July 1953 Plenum.<sup>102</sup> As we have already seen, there were few other removals from the Central Committee in 1953–5. Three of these, Beria and two of his associates, Goglidze and Kobulev, were removed from the CC in accordance with the rules, at a plenum, in July 1953. Three other Beria men, Arutinov, Bagirov, and Merkulov, were evidently removed from the Central Committee shortly after this, possibly without the formal sanction of a real plenum.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile Shatalin and

Shcherbakov; the 1946 plenum confirmed Beria and Malenkov as members and Bulganin and Kosygin as candidates.

The reported correspondence ballots in 1946–9 were as follows: 1946—May, Patolichev elected as, Malenkov removed as secretary. 1947—May, Patolichev removed from Orgburo and as secretary, Suslov elected as secretary. 1948—February, Bulganin elected Politburo full member; July, Malenkov and Ponomarenko elected as secretaries; September, Kosygin elected Politburo full member. 1949—March, Voznesenskii removed from Politburo, Kuznetsov and Rodionov from the Orgburo, B. N. Chernousov elected to Orgburo; December, Khrushchev elected, Popov removed as secretary.

<sup>99</sup> Shakhurin's case was discussed by the Politburo in April 1946 (Aksenov, 'Apogeia', 100; Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 27).

<sup>100</sup> Lozovskii's removal was approved by a 'correspondence ballot' ('O tak nazyvaemom "dele evreiskogo antifashistskogo komiteta"', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 12, p. 37). The fullest source on party infighting in this period makes no reference to a plenum actually meeting; Kuznetsov was 'reassigned' out of the Secretariat by the Politburo on the day the Central Committee plenum is supposed to have taken place, 28 January 1949 (Zhukov, 'Bor'ba', 33 f.).

<sup>101</sup> 'O . . . "Leningradskom dele"', 130. It is not clear that Kuznetsov or Rodionov was ever formally removed from the CC.

<sup>102</sup> Ignat'ev was initially removed from the CC by a decision of the Presidium on 24 April; the correspondence ballot was held on 27–8 April; see V. V. Zhuravlev, ed., *XX s"ezd KPSS i ego istoricheskie real'nosti* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991), 16.

<sup>103</sup> Merkulov was shot with Beria in December 1953. Arutinov and Bagirov, the prime ministers of Armenia and Georgia, spoke against Beria at the July 1953 plenum, but both were disgraced almost immediately. Bagirov, at least, was apparently removed from the Central Committee in July ('Sostav rukovodiashchikh organov TsK', 85), although that was not mentioned in the plenum report.

Zhukov were promoted at the July plenum from candidate to full membership.<sup>104</sup> Thereafter, apparently, no changes were made to the composition of the Central Committee.

The terrible events of 1937–8 should not be seen as a ‘Chinese wall’ in the history of the Soviet elite. Stalin did not—if that was ever his objective—advance through means of the Great Terror a uniform cohort of unthinking loyalists. Nor did he—in the spirit of economic development—comprehensively replace a ‘Red’ generation with a ‘Red and expert’ one. Under High Stalinism the stress was still on ‘the combination of old and young cadres’. The ‘second generation’ were not identical with the late Stalinist elite; they shared power with survivors of the first, and not just in Stalin’s immediate entourage. The balance was tilted more in favour of the new generation in 1952—as compared to 1939—but the first generation were still in the Central Committee elite in strength; the situation is confused by the expansion of the CC, which in turn followed on from the growing complexity of the Soviet political and economic system.

The late Stalinist elite, of both the first and second generations, enjoyed a substantial degree of security. The causes of the Great Terror of 1937–8, especially the massacre of the early Stalinist elite, both in the Central Committee and outside it, remain debatable. It did turn out to be a tragic but unique event. Perhaps the Second World War had something to do with this. The Soviet elite had stood the test of the Nazi onslaught and established the USSR as a superpower: ‘the victors are not judged.’ It is remarkable, too, that the general balance of responsibilities (job slots) within the CC remained so constant from the 1930s onwards, despite the drastic personnel changes in the early period.

There clearly was a distinct new generation, the ‘class of ’38’. But the *individuals* from this second generation, 328 in all, who took on the senior posts in the late Stalinist system after 1938 would not numerically dominate the Soviet elite throughout the post-war period, let alone until the early 1980s. There was to be a high degree of turnover, some of it political, some of it biological. The term ‘Brezhnev generation’ can be misleading. After the elections at the 23rd Party Congress in 1966—at the start of the ‘Brezhnev era’ proper—only sixty-three of the late Stalinist elite survived, in a Central Committee of 360. Five-sixths of the Brezhnev-era Central Committee had, in other words, not served on the CC under Stalin. Even in the ‘leading group’, the Politburo and Secretariat, members of our late Stalinist elite made up only nine out of twenty-four individuals. On the other hand, looking at the second generation more broadly, the picture is different. In 1966 the median year of birth for the Central Committee as a whole was

<sup>104</sup> It was, in fact, surprising that in October 1952 Zhukov had been elected to the Central Committee even as a candidate. He was then only commander of the Urals Military District and had been removed from the Central Committee in 1946. This may be another clue that things were changing even before Stalin’s death.

still 1912 (i.e. in the middle of the second generation), and these people had been through a comparable range of experiences. They might not have reached the Central Committee elite level under Stalin, but, in the strange telescoping of the elite which came in part from the Purges, they were near-contemporaries of people who had. It was thus from the same pool of the second generation that replacements, other individuals, were drawn for the Central Committee elite throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and even 1970s. That is what makes this generation, the 'young cadres', with their particular characteristics and life experiences especially interesting to historians of Soviet Russia.

Just as the late Stalinist elite were not all from the second generation, so the second generation were not all *vydvizhentsy* (defined as individuals who received a technical education as adults during the 'Cultural Revolution' period). An emphasis on either the 'Brezhnev generation' or the *vydvizhentsy* can be misleading. Growing social and technological complexities were having a profound effect on the elite, fragmenting it into different strands, between which there was very little crossover.

The common elements of this second generation, what Sovietologists called the class of '38 and what the Stalinists called the 'young cadres', were self-evidently age (and corresponding party experience), and life experience. In contrast to the first generation, the proportion of peasants (or peasant-workers) and ethnic Russians was substantially higher. A picture of a typical individual, stressing common features across different career specialities, can be sketched out. He was a Russian male, born in a village in the first decade of the century. He was too young to have taken an active part in the Revolution. A product of his times, he was drawn, towards the end of the NEP or the period of the 1st Five Year Plan, socially into the growing urban working class and politically into the Communist Party. Often a poor education received in the villages in the early 1910s and 1920s was 'topped up' by some form of adult education. From there the choice of career tracks diverged, to further technical education and economic administrative work, to low-level party administration in town or country, or to the junior ranks of the Red Army 'command-staff'. Whatever the occupation sector, he was promoted rapidly at the end of the 1930s. This was only partly because of the vacancies created by the Great Terror. A more important factor was the great increase in the number of administrative posts in the industrial economy, in the party central and territorial administration, and in the army. He was perhaps a 'purge beneficiary', but even more he was a beneficiary of the maturing Soviet system, a beneficiary of Stalin's social revolution. He was the product of the particular Stalinist ideological environment of the *Short Course* period, but his 'steel' was also 'tempered' in the experience of the Great Patriotic War. From this both he, and the system as a whole, and probably even Stalin, emerged with even greater confidence.

The late Soviet elite, because of the cadres revolution which pushed the second generation up, and because of the common stresses and strains they had passed

through, emerged as a cohesive and self-conscious group. Some observers have seen them now reaching their full potential as a 'ruling class'. Speaking of his 'unfair' sidelining by Khrushchev, Patolichev said that 'if in a forest they cut the roots of one tree it will wither away. But the forest will continue to live and grow.'<sup>105</sup> In the years that followed the system would be run more and more in the interests of this elite 'forest'.

The consensus among the historians, political scientists, and sociologists who have studied the class of '38, the second generation, is that they were, as a group, very important. There are remarkable differences, however, in how they have been evaluated as a force for good or ill. Part of the reason for this was a result of how long the second generation stayed in power. They can be evaluated quite differently at the beginning and the end—modernizers in the 1940s, dead wood in the 1970s. Simple biology took its toll of an ageing elite, but equally the tasks confronting the Soviet system were changing. For better or worse, however, one generation of the elite, the class of '38, Stalin's 'young cadres' of 1939, did form the majority of the Soviet elite at Central Committee level for decades, and the successes and failures of the USSR cannot be fully understood without understanding them.

<sup>105</sup> Patolichev, *Sovest'iu*, 233. Two important studies of the Soviet system which see the full development of a ruling bureaucracy in the 1950s are Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* (New York: New Press, 1994), and Milovan Djilas, *The New Class* (New York: Praeger, 1957).



## 4 | Stalinist Generation, ‘Leninist Norms’, 1956–1966

All that is, of course, true, Georgii Maksimilianovich. But the apparatus is our foundation.

N. S. Khrushchev, 1953

The [20th] Congress charged the Central Committee to give effect to consistent measures ensuring that the cult of personality—which is alien to Marxism-Leninism—will be overcome, that its consequences in all areas of party, state, and ideological work will be liquidated, and that the norms of party life and principles of collective leadership worked out by the great Lenin will be strictly implemented.

From CC Resolution, ‘On Overcoming the Cult of Personality and its Consequences’, 30 June 1956

Comrades, we, members of the Presidium of the CC, we are servants of the Plenum, and the Plenum is our master. (*Applause.*)

N. S. Khrushchev, 22 June 1957

For Western as well as Russian scholars the later 1950s and early 1960s is a confused and contradictory period. It was dominated by Nikita Khrushchev, who became first secretary of the Central Committee in September 1953 and prime minister in March 1958. Khrushchev was a man who gained his membership of the Politburo under Stalin in the late 1930s, yet went on to lead a campaign of de-Stalinization and reform in the 1950s and 1960s. An early influential interpretation was that Khrushchev was only a ‘transitional’ leader. Having spent all his life within established mores, he was uncertain about how to depart from them. Khrushchev, in this interpretation, was ‘supreme’ from 1957 (i.e. had no effective internal rivals), and the evasions and contradictions in Soviet policy in the late 1950s and early 1960s reflected his own personal limits and uncertainties. His

defeat and resignation in 1964, in turn, were the result of a neglect of the political skills that had originally ensured his success.<sup>1</sup> A later, more generous, view was that Khrushchev was an 'original leader', one whose intention was to bring about a fundamental reform of the Soviet system. An attempt was made, by changes in the party rules, to ensure that there was a constant process of renewal in leading party bodies. There was much more openness,<sup>2</sup> and an emphasis upon participation and popular control: the CPSU almost doubled its ranks, the powers of the soviets were expanded, and a range of public functions were transferred to citizens themselves—all of this conceived as a strategy by which the whole society would enter the communist era by the year 2000. After 1985, and in a different way after 1991, this second interpretation merged with a view of Khrushchev as a precursor of *perestroika*.<sup>3</sup> From this perspective Khrushchev's inconsistencies reflected not personal limitations but his need to outmanoeuvre conservative top-level opponents in the Presidium (i.e. the Politburo); his defeat reflected the strength of those opponents.

There is another historical perspective, and one that takes into account the development of the ruling elite. Some 458 individuals were elected as full or candidate members of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the 1956 and 1961 party congresses. An analysis of this ruling elite helps clarify both Khrushchev's vision of what the party elite should be like and the extent and limits of his power. This was also a period when, partly due to the attention being paid to the 'Leninist norms of party life', and partly due to a struggle for power in the Presidium, the 'legal' or 'constitutional' role of the broader Central Committee elite was given more emphasis. As a result the elite, assembled in a Central Committee plenum, had more apparent power than at any other time from the 1920s to 1991. We have already seen how it was summoned to expel Beria in 1953. It acted even more dramatically in June 1957 to overrule the Presidium when Khrushchev was threatened by a coalition of enemies in the top leadership. The result was the expulsion of the so-called 'anti-party group' in 1957, notably the Stalinist leaders Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich. Finally, the October 1964 Central Committee plenum, which ousted Khrushchev, might be seen as the decisive victory of the Central Committee elite and its interests over a 'reformist' leader. Indeed, there is a basic question. Why did the Central Committee elite support Khrushchev against a Presidium majority in June 1957, and then reject him in October 1964?

<sup>1</sup> Merle Fainsod, 'Khrushchevism in Retrospect', *Problems of Communism*, 14: 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1965), 1–10; Martin McCauley (ed.), *Khrushchev and Khrushchevism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 26–7, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive biographical information about Soviet leaders was one of the results of the openness of the Khrushchev period.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Fedor Burlatskii, 'Khrushchev: Strikhi k politicheskomu portretu', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 24 Feb. 1988, p. 14.

## The Elite Under Khrushchev

Personnel 'renewal' was a central feature of the Khrushchev era. The famous Article 25 of the 1961 version of the party rules stipulated that '[d]uring elections for party organs the principle of the systematic renewal of their composition and continuity of leadership is observed', and went on to make specific provision about the Central Committee: 'At all regular elections the composition of the Central Committee of the CPSU is renewed by not less than one quarter of its composition.' Table 4.1 shows that there was no difficulty in achieving a renewal of much more than the 25 per cent laid down. Of the 236 people in the 1952 Central Committee as a whole, 44 per cent (104 individuals) were not re-elected in 1956. Of the 255 in the 1956 Central Committee, 50 per cent (128) were not re-elected in 1961. (In 1966 the percentage not re-elected would drop to 27 per cent—still within the guidelines but much lower.)

Expansion was a less painful means of renewal than turnover, and it was more profitable in terms of patronage. An important feature of the Khrushchev years was that the Central Committee was getting bigger. The nominal size of the Central Committee had been constant from the 12th to the 18th Congresses (in effect, from 1927 to 1952), with seventy-one full members and from fifty to sixty-eight candidate members, but under Stalin in 1952 the size of the total Central Committee was increased by nearly 70 per cent. As Table 4.1 shows, what Khrushchev did was to maintain the growth and introduce another increase in

**Table 4.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1952–1966

Congress	19th	20th	22nd	23rd
	Oct.	Feb.	Oct.	Mar.–Apr.
	1952	1956	1961	1966
Full members	125	133	175	195
Candidate members	111	122	155	165
Total mems/cands	236	255	330	360
In previous CC	65	142	127	240
Not in previous CC	171	113	203	120
In next CC	142	127	240	262
Not in next CC	104	128	90	98
Turnover (%)	53	44	50	27

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected. The 21st 'Extraordinary' Congress in 1959 did not elect a Central Committee.

1961, which made the total Central Committee nearly two and a half times larger than it had been for most of the Stalin era (330 full members and candidates as compared with 139). In 1956–61 the absolute number of new full and candidate members increased by 80 per cent (203 new members and candidates in 1961, 62 per cent of the total, compared to 113 new members and candidates in 1956, 44 per cent). Putting these changes another way, nearly half (82/175) of the full members of the Central Committee which ousted Khrushchev in 1964 were 'his' appointees.

There were few changes to the Central Committee between congresses, in contrast to what had happened under Stalin after 1936 and what would happen under Gorbachev at the end of the 1980s. Although Khrushchev transformed the Presidium immediately after June 1957 he would not effect a general change in the Central Committee for four years, that is, until the 22nd Congress; he made no personnel changes at the 'extraordinary' 21st Congress in January–February 1959. Even the Brezhnev–Kosygin leadership made more dramatic use of a plenum when it promoted nine candidates to full member status in November 1964 (and removed Khrushchev's son-in-law, full member A. I. Adzhubei). The few changes in the immediate aftermath of Stalin's death were outlined in Chapter 3. Later Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, and Shepilov—the 'anti-party group' (see below)—were removed at the June 1957 plenum, followed by Marshal Zhukov at the October 1957 plenum. It is remarkable that there was so little fall-out from the June 1957 plenum.

After 1957 there were only a handful of other removals, linked to scandals. The first secretary of the Turkmen SSR (S. Babaev) was removed in late 1958. The 1961 rules were more specific than earlier versions about the removal of a CC member if he did not 'justify the high confidence shown him by the party' and if he 'lets his honour and dignity fall'; procedures were provided for removal by a CC plenum.<sup>4</sup> There were, however, few cases where this procedure was used. S. D. Daulenov, the prime minister of the Kazakh SSR, was accused of improper behaviour and Marshal Varentsov was compromised by the Penkov'skii spy scandal; both were dismissed from the CC at the June 1963 plenum. Meanwhile V. I. Poliakov and A. P. Rudakov, whom Khrushchev made Central Committee secretaries at the November 1962 plenum, were simultaneously promoted from candidate to full member.

What can be said about the 458 individuals who held the various Central Committee-level jobs during the 1950s and 1960s? The Central Committee under Khrushchev, as under his predecessors, was based on the 'job-slot' system.

<sup>4</sup> The powers under the 1939 party rules for dealing with 'violation of party and state discipline, the revival or toleration of double dealing and fractionalism' by a plenum were broadly similar to those of 1961, as were those in the party rules approved in 1952 and 1956; the 1961 rules did, however, specify a closed ballot. The 1939 rules specified that more general renewal could be accomplished by a (supposedly annual) all-union conference, but there was nothing like this in the 1952/6 rules.

**Table 4.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1952–1966

	1952 CC		1956 CC		1961 CC		1966 CC	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Central party	19	8	15	6	26	8	27	7
Central state	57	24	65	25	55	17	77	21
Republic party	18	8	19	7	30	9	31	9
Republic state	17	7	22	9	33	11	38	11
Regional party	59	25	83	33	93	28	95	26
Regional state	2	1	4	2	12	4	6	2
Military	26	11	18	7	31	9	32	9
Police	9	4	2	1	1	0	1	0
Diplomatic	6	2	13	5	15	4	16	4
Media/Science/Arts	11	5	9	3	18	5	15	4
Production	1	0	5	2	16	5	22	6
Unknown/Ambiguous	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	236	100	255	100	330	100	360	100

*Notes:* The posts held by individuals at the time of congresses are reliably known for the 22nd and 23rd Congresses, as the published stenographic report (*stenotchet*) gives the posts currently held by all delegates—although in 1961 a dozen or so of those elected, mostly ambassadors, had not been delegates. The situation is more difficult for the 20th Congress, as the *stenotchet* gives only the party organization each delegate represented. The 19th Congress in 1952 is most difficult of all, as no full *stenotchet* was published (and the material was not available to us in RTsKhIDNI); in addition quite a few individuals changed their posts in the course of 1952, and it is often not clear in these cases whether the change came before or after the October 1952 congress.

'Central state' excludes ministers for the armed forces and foreign affairs, but includes trade union officials. 'Republic party' refers to *union* republics. 'Regions' include level of oblast', krai, ASSR, AO, as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. 'Diplomatic' includes Foreign Ministry officials and ambassadors.

As Table 4.2 makes clear, whatever happened to turnover, the balance did not change much under Khrushchev. The institutional categories represented in 1956 and even 1961 were not remarkably different from those in 1952. The proportion of central state officials—ministers and so on—was essentially the same in 1952 and 1956 (24–5 per cent) but dropped to 17 per cent in 1961. This is to be explained by Khrushchev's decentralizing administrative reforms, which abolished most of the economic ministries in 1957. There were major increases in Central Committee representation at union-republic level in 1961, with the number of party job slots there rising from nineteen to thirty, and state ones from twenty-two to thirty-three. In 1961 every union republic was represented by its first secretary as a full member of the Central Committee, with additional representation depending on its geographical importance—the Ukrainian SSR had no fewer than five secretaries on the CC. All but one of the union republics (the Uzbek SSR) were also represented on the state side by the chairman of their

Council of Ministers, and seven republics had in addition the chairman of the presidiums of their Supreme Soviets; the larger republics (including the RSFSR) had some additional state posts. In 1956 some ten to fifteen more *oblasts*, *krais*, and ASSRs had representation.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of regional secretaries (mostly obkom first secretaries) fell by 5 per cent in 1961, a surprising development, given that these officials are often seen as Khrushchev's base of support. On the other hand, the absolute number of regions represented was slightly *increased*, with the addition of a number from Central Asia and the Ukraine, and of some smaller regions within the RSFSR. It was largely the increased representation of non-Russian republics, and of regions within those republics, that reversed the late Stalinist Russification of the Central Committee. The proportion of ethnic Russians fell from 73 per cent (of those whose nationality was known) in the 1939, 1941, and 1952 Central Committees, to 64 per cent (256/400 [458]) in the 1956 and 1961 Central Committees.

The diplomatic corps finally received greater recognition at Central Committee level during the Khrushchev years. The general trend was for greater representation of the USSR's socialist allies and of her major friends in the Third World. In 1952 the USA, Britain, and China were the countries whose Soviet ambassadors were on the Central Committee. In 1956 Czechoslovakia, India, Japan, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia were added; Britain and Japan were removed in 1961, and Bulgaria, Indonesia, Iran, and North Korea added. In 1966 there would be thirteen countries, removing Indonesia, Iran, and North Korea and adding Algeria, France, the GDR, Hungary, and Mongolia.

Another development was the appearance of what might be called 'token' representatives involved in production, rank-and-file managers and workers from the economy—although only in modest numbers. In 1956 there were two plant directors, the chairman of a collective farm, a miner, and a lathe operator (all candidates). The increase in the number of 'token' members from five to sixteen in 1961 did perhaps mark a qualitative change and was symptomatic of the populist style of the Khrushchev years. In addition to five factory managers (and one factory-shop manager), there were now five skilled industrial workers, three farm directors, and two agricultural workers.

However, these changes in the various categories of Central Committee member should not be exaggerated. The general shape of the Central Committee remained the same, with broadly similar bureaucratic and other 'constituencies', within 5–10 per cent of the 1956 'establishment'—and that of 1952. It was not as great a change as the one Gorbachev attempted in 1990, nor as that which had occurred in the 1920s when the 'job-slot' system itself matured. The 1966 Central Committee, after the Khrushchev period, showed further continuities; Khrushchev kept the 'job-slot' system that had evolved under Stalin, and whatever

<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to be precise about how many more regions were represented in 1956, as it is still not clear exactly which regions had been represented in 1952.

aspects of Khrushchev's era his successors were dissatisfied with, these did not include the system of Central Committee representation.

Another element of continuity was generational. Crucial to an understanding of the 1950s and 1960s is the predominance in the 1956 and 1961 Central Committees, as in those of 1952 and 1966, of the second generation, the 'class of '38', leaders born between 1901 and 1920 (see Table 4.3). Their strength rose from 70 per cent (166/236) in 1952 to 83 per cent (299/360) in 1966. The rise of the 'second generation' of the Soviet elite was discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3. The 1950s and 1960s completed the supremacy of that generation. The median year of birth for Central Committee members, for instance, only changed from 1904 in the 1952 Central Committee (i.e. making the median age 48 at the time of the election) to 1907 in the 1961 Central Committee (making the median age 54). The *first* generation still made up about a quarter (26 per cent) of the Central Committee in 1952; by 1961 they were only 8 per cent. The Soviet-born third generation contributed only a small proportion, some 5 per cent in 1961—and a number of those born after 1920 were on the Central Committee in a 'token' capacity, rather than as part of the elite proper. The relative weight of the second generation is also clear from information on party careers. The median year of party entry for those elected to the Central Committee in 1956 and 1961 was 1932; interestingly, the years in which the greatest number joined the Communist Party were 1939 and 1940, with a total of 107 out of 458.<sup>6</sup>

The characteristics of this second generation have already been discussed at length in Chapter 3. An individual born in 1908—the median year of birth for Central Committee members elected in 1956 and 1961—was 9 years old in 1917, 21 in 1929, 29 in 1937, and 45 in 1953. The larger part of this second generation

<sup>6</sup> Generational stability is also generally evident in this period among party congress delegates. Aggregate data is available for congresses held 10 years apart, in 1956 and 1966. The age range in the available data is slightly different from our own. The relevant cohort are those congress delegates aged 50 or less (in effect aged 31–50) in 1956 and aged 41–60 in 1966; these groups would have birth years from 1906 to 1925, approximating our 1901–20 second generation. The number born in 1906–25 dropped from about 76% in 1956 to 56% in 1966. On the other hand, the 1956 figure of 76% represented 1,030 voting delegates out of 1,355 and the 1966 figure of 56% represented 2,768 delegates (voting and non-voting) out of 4,943. Thus the absolute number of delegates from the second generation, if not the percentage, would seem to have held up.

The year congress delegates joined the party membership shows a similar trend. Of the delegates, those admitted to the party in the 1930s (in 1931–40) made up 34% in both 1956 and 1959. In 1961 and 1966 the percentage joining in that decade dropped to 22% and 15%, respectively, but the drop—as with the age changes—is partly explained by the trebling of the number of delegates. See *XX s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu, 14–25 fevralia 1956 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1956), i. 238; *Vneochednoi XXI s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu, 27 ianvaria–5 fevralia 1959 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1959), i. 261; *XXII s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu, 17–31 oktiabria 1961 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962), i. 429; *XXIII s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu, 29 marta–8 aprilia 1966 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1966), i. 284f.

**Table 4.3.** Generational breakdown of CC members, 1952–1966

	1952 CC	1956 CC	1961 CC	1966 CC
First generation	62	44	28	23
Second generation	166	201	285	299
Third generation	1	2	17	38
Unknown	7	8	0	0
TOTAL	236	255	330	360

*Note:* First generation born before 1900, second generation born 1901–20, third generation born 1921–40.

came from the villages, generally moving to the towns as adolescents or young adults. Many were advanced into senior posts by the Purges. They were, as a group, in positions of responsibility during the Second World War. The educational level of the Central Committee elite was mixed. There have been arguments that the educational level of the elite as a whole rose substantially in the 1950s. A recent Russian survey of the early post-Stalin period noted the beginnings of 'a tendency towards the *tekhnokratizatsiia* of the party apparat': in 1952 68 per cent of regional and republic secretaries had a higher education, but by 1956 the proportion had risen to 86 per cent. Jerry Hough made much of the fact that there were more regional first secretaries with technical training after the late 1950s (comparing 1957 with 1962).<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Moshe Lewin may be correct in claiming that the real 'cultural revolution' occurred only after 1945, too late fully to transform the second generation of leaders, who remained a 'quasi-intelligentsia'. What higher vocational or academic training they received was in the Soviet period, typically as adults and in the turmoil of 1925–35.<sup>8</sup> It would appear that in reality any improvement in overall education standards of the elite was incremental, and a result of the rising proportion of the better-educated, but not well-educated, second generation.

An analysis of the educational level of party congress delegates also provides a rough guide to the higher elite. The proportion of those with a higher education stabilized. In both 1956 and 1959 the figure for those who had completed a higher education was 56 per cent (for 1,355 and 1,269 voting delegates respectively), which was actually lower than the 60 per cent claimed in 1952. Engineers made up about a third of those who had completed higher education in 1959, or 23 per cent

<sup>7</sup> V. V. Zhuravlev (ed.), *XX s"ezd KPSS i ego istoricheskie real'nosti* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991), 22; Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Prefects* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 62. N. A. Barsukov, the author of the relevant section of *XX s"ezd KPSS i ego istoricheskie real'nosti*, noted corresponding increases of those with a higher education at town and urban district level from 40 to 57%, and at rural district level from 13% to 28%.

<sup>8</sup> Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (London: Methuen, 1985), 41, 246.





Rather than a clear personal following, it was probably more significant that Khrushchev had the same kind of *general* support from the elite that Stalin had had for the 'General Line' in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many of Khrushchev's policies were designed to secure this broad support of the elite. The 'institutionalization' of the Central Committee plenum, mentioned in the final section of this chapter, was a part of this.

## The Old and the New

The careers of a selection of the Central Committee elite bring out some characteristics and continuities of the 1950s and early 1960s. Andreev, Patolichev, and Baibakov—discussed in earlier chapters—were re-elected to the Central Committee in 1956, and exemplify some of the continuities with the earlier period. We will also look at three new members: Nikolai Zhurin, Vladimir Novikov, and Nikolai Egorychev.<sup>13</sup>

Although Andrei Andreev was only 60 in 1956—a year younger than Khrushchev—his official posts were only ceremonial. Some of Stalin's comrades actively opposed Khrushchev in 1957 and were expelled from the Central Committee. Andreev did not, but like Bulganin and Voroshilov he was not re-elected to the Central Committee in 1961; in contrast, leading Stalinists like Mikoian and Shvernik were re-elected in 1961, and even Voroshilov returned to the Central Committee under Brezhnev in 1966. In October 1957 Andreev was made chairman of the Soviet–Chinese Friendship Society, which was possibly a calculated insult to Mao Zedong by Khrushchev. Andreev was head of the society through the strained decade of the 1960s, despite a stroke in 1965 which paralysed him down the left side. When Andreev died in December 1971 he was not buried in the pantheon of the Kremlin wall behind the Lenin Mausoleum. Like Khrushchev, who had passed away three months earlier, he was relegated to the Novodevich'e Cemetery. Neither Brezhnev nor Kosygin returned from trips abroad—to Poland and Norway respectively—to attend the funeral.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The following discussion is based on interviews carried out in 1991–2 as part of the Soviet Elite Project (SEP) and on recent published sources. Patolichev and Baibakov, as we saw in Chap. 3, produced memoirs, some in the *glasnost'* era or later. Novikov and Egorychev also produced *glasnost'*-era published accounts: V. N. Novikov, 'V gody rukovodstva N. S. Khrushcheva', *Voprosy istorii*, 1989, no. 1, pp. 105–17; no. 2, pp. 103–17; 'Napravlen poslom . . .', *Ogonek*, 1989, no. 6, pp. 6–7, 28–30 (interview with N. G. Egorychev by Leonid Pleshakov); 'Posle XX s'ezda . . . : Interv'iu s N. G. Egorychevym', *Voprosy istorii KPSS* (May 1991), 93–106; N. A. Barsukov, 'Khrushchevskie vremena. Neprinuzhdennye besedy s politicheskimi deiateliami "velikogo desiatiletia"', in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia XX vek* (Moscow: Istoricheskoe nasledie, 1992), *kn.* 1, pp. 290–304 (interview with N. G. Egorychev). Other information comes from the standard biographical sources, but for Egorychev see also the candid entry in *Moskovskaia gorodskaiia organizatsiia: 1917–1988: Tsify, dokumenty, materialy* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1989), 153–4.

<sup>14</sup> *Izvestiia*, 8 Dec. 1971, p. 3. In contrast, K. E. Voroshilov and N. M. Shvernik had been interred behind the Lenin Mausoleum in 1969 and 1970. On the other hand, A. A. Mikoian, Andreev's near contemporary, was buried in the Novodevich'e Cemetery in 1978.

Patolichev, the wartime party chief in Cheliabinsk region and erstwhile Central Committee secretary, found that while contemporaries like Brezhnev went on to higher offices his own career stalled. His 1952 election to the enlarged party Presidium was undone by Stalin's death, and in 1956 he was replaced as first secretary in Belorussia by a 'native', Mazurov. His appointment as first deputy foreign minister was in effect a demotion away from his metier of 'party work'. In 1958 he moved to be minister of Foreign Trade, where he stayed until Gorbachev retired him twenty-seven years later.<sup>15</sup> He was, however, a Central Committee full member until 1986, serving for nearly half-a-century, a beneficiary of the 'stability of cadres' under Brezhnev.

Baibakov, the young 'non-party' technocrat who had become deputy head of the People's Commissariat for the Petroleum Industry (NKNP) in 1939, was also a long-serving Central Committee member (1952–89). He was a 'man of '38' who flourished under Khrushchev and his successors, in contrast to Patolichev, but he never reached the Politburo. The success of the petroleum industry led to his appointment as head of the State Commission for Long-Range Economic Planning in 1955, and then of the RSFSR Gosplan; it helped that the chemical industry was one of Khrushchev's interests. His promotion—effectively in place of M. Z. Saburov—was probably part of Khrushchev's campaign to replace the group of senior economic managers associated with his (Khrushchev's) rival Malenkov.<sup>16</sup> The appointment procedure was no less abrupt than in Stalin's time. Summoned to an interview with the first secretary in 1955, Baibakov tried to avoid the move away from the oil ministry: 'Nikita Sergeevich, I don't know anything about planning, don't move me, I'm a dyed-in-the-wool oil man.' 'Don't worry about it, you'll learn,' was Khrushchev's retort. Although Baibakov asked for twenty-four hours to think about it, he found when he returned to his own office that a red 'cadres' envelope had already been delivered by special courier; in the envelope was his appointment, dated the previous day.<sup>17</sup> Baibakov later led two of Khrushchev's economic regions (*sovnarkhozy*), in Krasnodar and the North Caucasus, before moving to be head of the State Committee for the Chemical and Petroleum Industry in 1963. Once again Baibakov had his doubts: 'Nikita Sergeevich, I don't know anything about chemistry.' At this point Khrushchev got his own back: 'But you're an oil man!' A year after Khrushchev was deposed Baibakov was made head of USSR Gosplan, a post he held until 1985. It is interesting that Baibakov later thanked Khrushchev for converting him from a narrow oil man and

<sup>15</sup> An earlier 'minister' of Foreign Trade, Mikoian, had been a powerful member of Stalin's inner circle, but he had also been simultaneously a deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and a Politburo full member.

<sup>16</sup> Conquest, *Power and Policy*, 258. Conquest describes Baibakov as 'untrained and therefore more pliable'.

<sup>17</sup> N. K. Baibakov interview, 1992, Soviet Elite Project (SEP). This conversation presumably took place in May 1955, which is when Baibakov changed posts. In his memoirs he makes the month August, see N. K. Baibakov, *Sorok let v pravitel'stve* (Moscow: Respublika, 1993), 62; this must be incorrect.

'throwing [*shvyrnut*]' him into' the Krasnodar economic region: 'I didn't know anything at all about agriculture and light industry before that.'

Of the new men, Nikolai Zhurin was a candidate member in 1956–61 and 1966–76, and came from the ranks of second-level, provincial leaders concerned primarily with agriculture. He was involved with the Virgin Lands of Kazakhstan, a centrepiece of Khrushchev's policies. Vladimir Novikov was one of the *khoziaistvenniki* (industrial managers), chairman of Gosplan in 1960–2, and a full member of the Central Committee in 1961–81. He was a key executive in Khrushchev's reform of economic administration. Nikolai Egorychev served on the Central Committee as a full member in 1961–71, initially as second secretary of the Moscow city party committee; he was a high-flying urban party leader. None of the three was a 'typical' Central Committee member, but Zhurin was not dissimilar to sixty or seventy other party leaders from agricultural republics and regions elected with him in 1956, and Novikov—ultimately the most important of the three—had a background like that of a similar number of central and republic *khoziaistvenniki* in the 1961 Central Committee. Egorychev was in some respects like dozens of other high-level officials (*apparatchiki*) of the central and urban party machinery, but in other ways—as we shall see—he was the exception that proved the rule.

Like the majority of contemporary Central Committee members, all three new men were ethnic Russians whose origins were in the countryside or in a provincial town. Zhurin grew up in Orenburg (in the southern Urals, on the edge of Kazakhstan), Novikov in the central Russian countryside 80 kilometres from Gor'kii; Egorychev lived with his widowed mother in Strogino, now a suburb of the city of Moscow but then only a village. Novikov's natural father had been a medical orderly, but Zhurin's father was a railway worker, and Egorychev's a peasant. Two of these three Central Committee members were no more than children at the time of the Revolution, and the third was born after it. Novikov (b. 1907) and Zhurin (b. 1908) were clearly of the second generation, like Baibakov (b. 1911) and Patolichev (b. 1908), and like most of the members of the 1956 and 1961 (and 1939 and 1952) Central Committees. Brezhnev himself—born in 1906—was only slightly older. All were young men who had been advanced into senior posts by the economic revolution and the Purges. Egorychev, born after the Revolution in 1920, came at the very end of the second generation.

Zhurin and Novikov, unlike the younger Egorychev, reached responsible positions before the war. Nikolai Zhurin became first secretary of Kustanai region (in the Kazakh SSR) in August 1939, aged only 31. His railway-worker father fought in the Civil War and was in the late 1930s an honoured worker-communist. The younger Zhurin himself had worked, after *proftekhshkola* (vocational secondary school), as a locomotive driver and railway technician until 1931, the year he joined the party. (He entitled his unpublished memoir 'From Locomotive Driver to First Secretary of a Region'.) In the 1930s he was



4.1 Nikolai Zhurin (from  
*Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta*  
SSSR, 1966)

involved in trade-union and party work, and in the administration of collectivized agriculture.

Vladimir Novikov became in 1939, at the age of 32, director of an armaments factory at Izhevsk, a historic munitions centre just west of the Urals; the factory employed 50,000 workers. His background and career paralleled that of Baibakov. In 1941 he was appointed deputy head (i.e. deputy minister) of the Commissariat of Armaments (NKV), replacing a man who had been arrested. Novikov was the stepson of a teacher, that is, a person classed as an 'employee' (*sluzhbashchii*), and as such had been denied a place at the Lesgaft Sports School in Leningrad. Despite this class disadvantage he was able to attend an industrial technical school (*tekhnikum*) in Novgorod. From the technical school he was assigned in the late 1920s to the armaments industry. He was to spend sixteen years at Izhevsk, and while working he completed a course at the Izhevsk branch of the Military-Mechanical Institute. His stepfather was arrested in 1934 and sentenced to forced labour, but Novikov was still admitted to the party in 1936. He later used his ministerial influence to effect his stepfather's release.

Central Committee membership was in the great majority of cases the result of promotion to high-level posts, rather than any last-minute decision at a party con-

gress, and this was true for Zhurin, Novikov, and Egorychev. The second secretary of a major republic (Zhurin), the chairman of Gosplan (Novikov), and the second secretary of the national capital (Egorychev) were all 'job slots' qualified for Central Committee status. Novikov had been a senior deputy of D. F. Ustinov in the armaments industry in 1952 and first deputy minister at the Ministry for General Machine Building (MOMS) in 1956, but neither position had qualified him even to be a delegate to the 19th or 20th Congresses. When these ministries were abolished by Khrushchev in 1957 Novikov was moved to a much more important post as head of the Leningrad area economic council (*sovmarkhoz*).<sup>18</sup> The new *sovmarkhozy* were generally headed by former ministers and deputy ministers. In Novikov's case there was patronage involved. The first secretary in Leningrad region (and a Presidium member) was Frol Kozlov, who had been a Central Committee plenipotentiary (*partorg TsK*) at Izhevsk in the late 1930s, and he backed Novikov's move to the Leningrad *sovmarkhoz*.

Novikov still did not get Central Committee status for a further four years—until the 22nd Congress in 1961. In the meantime he had been made chairman of the RSFSR Gosplan, then chairman of the USSR Gosplan (in both cases following his patron Kozlov, who became RSFSR prime minister and then USSR first deputy prime minister). When Kozlov became a Central Committee secretary Novikov was appointed (in May 1960) one of five deputy prime ministers, directly under prime minister Khrushchev, and this certainly qualified him for Central Committee full membership at the 1961 Congress. Unfortunately Khrushchev lost confidence in Novikov in June 1962, and he was reduced to being head of the Commission for Foreign Economic Affairs (KVEV), another Khrushchevian body.<sup>19</sup> These rapid changes of institutions and appointments were one of the features of the Khrushchev era that would be so heavily criticized in later years. In any event Novikov remained on the Central Committee, and by 1966, under Brezhnev, was in another high post that qualified for Central Committee membership. His patron Kozlov had died, but Novikov had worked successfully in 1960–2 with Kosygin, now the prime minister. In March 1965 Novikov had again become a deputy prime minister, responsible for foreign trade and machine-building, and he stayed there until retirement in 1980.

Nikolai Zhurin, meanwhile, had been exposed to the uncertain world of an agricultural party leader. When his region did not produce the required grain procurement he was demoted in October 1941 to be first secretary of a lowly rural district (*raikom*) in Semipalatinsk region. He then worked his way back up through a number of better regional party posts, still in Kazakhstan, becoming first secretary at regional level again in November 1951, this time at Akmolinsk region.

<sup>18</sup> The *sovmarkhozy* were Khrushchev-era economic super-regions. Novikov's incorporated the Leningrad, Pskov, and Novgorod administrative regions (*oblasti*).

<sup>19</sup> For an analysis of the background to Novikov's removal see Tatu, *Power*, 283–8. The commission was part of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers.



4.2 Vladimir Novikov (from  
*Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta*  
SSSR, 1974)

Although not yet a Central Committee member, he was invited to attend the September 1953 plenum on agriculture, as Khrushchev began to open up the agrarian question. By the time of the 20th Congress in February 1956 he was elected to Central Committee candidate membership, probably in view of an imminent promotion to second secretary of the Kazakh SSR; by the time of the 20th Congress the second secretary post in a number of the larger republics had gained Central Committee status.<sup>20</sup> However, demotion back to the post of first secretary of a region (North Kazakhstan) came in December 1957, and Zhurin thereafter stayed at that level. In 1961 few of the Kazakh regions carried Central Committee status, and Zhurin, while a delegate to the 22nd Congress, was not re-elected to the Central Committee. By the time of the 1966 and 1971 congresses, however, Central Committee representation had been expanded to include more regions, among them Aktiubinsk, where Zhurin was now first secretary (1964–72), and he returned to the Committee.

<sup>20</sup> Brezhnev, Kazakh SSR first secretary, was promoted to become Central Committee secretary at the 20th Congress, a move presumably arranged beforehand by his patron Khrushchev. Brezhnev was replaced by his second secretary, which in turn opened up a post for Zhurin; Zhurin's future promotion was thus probably taken into account at the time of the election to the Central Committee.

Egorychev, meanwhile, had become second secretary for the Moscow city committee (*gorkom*), which entitled him to full membership of the Central Committee in 1961. Moscow was then the only city where the party second secretary had Central Committee status. In November 1962 Egorychev moved from second secretary to first secretary of the city committee. These posts were a springboard to top-level office.

Baibakov and Patolichev, and the three men who had reached their elite positions under Khrushchev, would continue in high posts under Brezhnev. This was typical of a large number of elite careers.<sup>21</sup> They would all benefit from the greater institutional stability after 1964. Zhurin had a further decade in Kazakh regions before retiring due to—genuine—ill health in 1972. Novikov served as a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers for fifteen years. Egorychev's meteoric career actually lasted only three more years, but before his fall he had been re-elected at the 23rd Congress in 1966. (V. V. Grishin, his successor in Moscow, would stay in post for eighteen years, until 1985.)

What else can we learn from these Central Committee members, other than that their careers were not affected much by the fall of Khrushchev? The three new men reflected the considerable degree of specialization that existed in the Central Committee during—and before and after—the Khrushchev years. The varied experience of a generalist like Patolichev now seemed the exception, and even he concentrated on foreign affairs and foreign trade after 1956. Zhurin worked in mainly agricultural regions of one republic, the Kazakh SSR, and never held a post in Moscow. He had a very limited technical education; his one period outside the Kazakh SSR was in 1947–8 when he was sent for a year on a course for leading party workers at the Higher Party School in Moscow. Baibakov and Novikov were economic technicians, Baibakov mainly in chemicals and petroleum, Novikov mainly in the military-industrial *kompleks*. Neither ever worked in party posts, nor had any concentrated formal party education. In retirement Novikov drew a distinction between himself and 'the elite': 'You know, it was the elite [*elita*] who ruined everything, and I didn't belong to the elite. . . . I was never involved in party work, I was in economic work. We didn't take bribes.'<sup>22</sup> Egorychev was, like Patolichev, more of a generalist, and such men had also existed in earlier Central Committees. For example, although Egorychev's duties were mainly concerned with the capital, during a brief stint in the apparat as a Central Committee inspector in 1960 one of his three tasks was to check the work of the party organization of North Kazakhstan region—Zhurin's bailiwick. Curiously, he too claimed never to have considered himself 'a professional party worker'.<sup>23</sup> Although essentially an *apparatchik*, he had at least nominally a better engineering education than Baibakov or Novikov. Much of his job, moreover, involved

<sup>21</sup> See Chap. 5.      <sup>22</sup> V. N. Novikov interview, May 1992, SEP.

<sup>23</sup> Egorychev, 'Posle XX s"ezda', 93.



supervising the development of industry, first in an important urban district (the Bauman district) and then in the whole city of Moscow.

Baibakov and Patolichev entered the Central Committee under Stalin, Zhurin and Novikov under Khrushchev. All were, like many others of the second generation, products of the Stalin years, beneficiaries of the crash educational programmes of the 'Cultural Revolution' and of the Purges. In terms of this kind of background Nikolai Egorychev was significantly different. Born in 1920, he was half-a-generation younger than the other four men, and as such less typical of the 1956 and 1961 Central Committees. A CC member aged only 41, as Egorychev was in 1961, would have been quite normal in the 1920s or 1930s. Baibakov was this age in 1952, Patolichev was only 30 in 1939, Andreev—an extraordinary case—only 24 in 1920. But by 1961 only 6 per cent of the new Central Committee (20/330) were Egorychev's age or younger (other prominent 'youngsters' were A. I. Adzhubei and V. E. Semichastnyi). At the end of the 1930s, when most of the second generation were being given responsible posts, Egorychev was still a teenager. He was only 18 in 1938, when he entered his engineering institute. His education was then interrupted by front-line war service (he was twice wounded and received the Red Star); he joined the party at the front in 1942. After demobilization in 1946 he completed his course in 1948 (aged 28), and only then began his rise through the Komsomol. Egorychev's career paralleled that of Khrushchev: party work in important Moscow technical institutes (the Industrial Academy—Promakademii—in Khrushchev's case, the Bauman Higher Technical Academy in Egorychev's), leadership of party committees in Moscow districts (including the Bauman district), second secretary of the Moscow city committee, and then first secretary. Other powerful incumbents as Moscow city first secretary had been Molotov and Kaganovich.

Egorychev, then, had a different perspective from most of the members of the 1956 and 1961 Central Committees. He took a generally critical view of his senior comrades: 'You know, the Stalin times destroyed a significant part of the leading [party] workers, and it mutilated [*iskalechilo*] the cadres who remained. I think that this was the greatest loss inflicted on our country and people by the cult of personality.' He considered himself to be different from them. 'Our generation', he recalled, 'lived through 1937–8, we were witnesses to events that were so tragic for our country, but our hands were clean. Our generation was the first after the Revolution to receive a real education. But it was a generation cut to pieces by the war.'<sup>24</sup> But Egorychev was an exception; it was neither he nor the third generation proper (i.e. those born *after* 1920, the year of Egorychev's birth) who were advanced under Khrushchev; they were still too young in the 1950s. Later, in the 1960s and 1970s, Brezhnev and his older generation would keep them at arm's length. Egorychev himself was due for a spectacular fall in 1967.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> 'Napravlen poslom', 30.

<sup>25</sup> See Chap. 5.



**4.3** Nikolai Egorychev addressing the 23rd Congress of the CPSU in 1966 (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)

## The Silver Age of the Central Committee

One important aspect of 'party legality' was the personal security of members of the Central Committee elite. This was for Khrushchev and others a major point of the de-Stalinization campaign, and especially of the famous 'Secret Speech' of February 1956. Much of Khrushchev's public de-Stalinization was aimed at exploiting the 'generation gap' and attracting the young barons within the Central Committee. The speech was delivered to a high-level party audience (the 20th Congress delegates) which included the new Central Committee. Very early in his address Khrushchev condemned the 'tyranny [*proizvol*] of Stalin towards the party [and] towards its Central Committee'. The specific point about ninety-eight of the 139 Central Committee members and candidates being shot had its response among his elite audience—'noise of indignation in the hall'.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> N. S. Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti. Doklad Pervogo sekretaria TsK KPSS N. S. Khrushcheva XX s"ezdu KPSS 25 fevralia 1956 g.', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989, no. 3, pp. 136 f.

The terrible episodes in the Secret Speech related, for the most part, not to simple Soviet citizens or even rank-and-file party members, but to members of the Central Committee elite. The Secret Speech can be seen as a defence of the interests of the elite. The definitive article on the origins of the speech suggests that a major influence on it was the condemnation by the 'leading circles of the party' of Stalin's repression of other leaders. 'State officials, members of the CC, the numerous local party workers, had grown tired of the constant expectation of arrest, prison, death, persecution of family members. They needed a firm guarantee of their personal security.'<sup>27</sup> It would appear to be the case that the Presidium majority (and not just Khrushchev) recognized the need to condemn Stalin, and accepted the notion that Khrushchev should give a secret report to the forthcoming congress on the 'cult of personality'. Indeed, the condemnation was apparently put to, and approved by, a secret Central Committee plenum held on 13 February 1956.<sup>28</sup> Certainly the criticism of the Stalin period, as it developed in the Presidium in late 1955, concerned the fate of Central Committee members, especially those elected at the 17th Congress in 1934. This was the first part of the terms of reference of the Pospelov commission ('for study of materials concerning mass repression of members and candidates of the CC A-UCP(b) elected by the 17th Party Congress and of other Soviet citizens in the period 1935-40'), which provided the information for Khrushchev's speech.<sup>29</sup>

Another strength of the Central Committee in these years was its political role. The formal powers of the Central Committee in the rules of 1952/6 were comprehensive. They were also essentially unchanged from 1934 and earlier, that is, the Central Committee 'guides all the work of the party, represents the party in relations with other parties, organizations and institutions, [and] organizes the various institutions of the party and guides their activities . . .' The wording was changed under Khrushchev in 1961, but the powers were similar; there was one important novelty: 'The CC CPSU regularly informs party organizations about its work.' It was in the Khrushchev era that printed stenographic reports of Central Committee plenums were published, rather than simply circulated to key individuals and organizations. The first one published was for the December 1958 plenum; the practice was brought to an end within a year of Brezhnev's accession as first secretary.<sup>30</sup> It also became the practice, for a time, to announce the timing and agenda of plenums in advance.

<sup>27</sup> V. P. Naumov, 'K istorii sekretnogo doklada N. S. Khrushcheva na XX s"ezde KPSS', *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1996, no. 4, pp. 153, 156. See also V. P. Naumov, 'Bor'ba N. S. Khrushcheva za edinolichnuiu vlast', *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1996, no. 2, pp. 13, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Naumov, 'K istorii sekretnogo doklada', 161 f.; curiously there is no reference to a plenum on this date in his 'Bor'ba N. S. Khrushcheva', only a reference to a Presidium meeting (p. 15).

<sup>29</sup> Naumov, 'Bor'ba N. S. Khrushcheva', 15. On the details of rehabilitation see N. F. Katkov, 'Vosstanovlenie istoricheskoi pravdy i spravedlivosti (Khronika reabilitatsii zhertv politicheskikh represii 20-50-kh godov)', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1991, no. 4, pp. 83-92.

<sup>30</sup> For Brezhnev's rejection of this openness see 'Praviashchaia partiia ostavalas' podpol'noi', *Istochnik*, 1993, no. 5-6, p. 95.

The 1952/6 and 1961 party rules envisaged plenums being held at least every six months (indeed the 1939 rules had stipulated a plenum at least every *four* months). A major innovation after 1953 was the holding of the specified number of plenums. In his Secret Speech to the 20th Congress Khrushchev stressed Stalin's departure from Leninist practice: during the last fifteen years of so of Stalin's career plenums were almost never held and '[i]n this practice was expressed Stalin's contempt for the norms of party life, his flouting of the principle of collectivity in party leadership'.<sup>31</sup> The large and lengthy meetings that were convened under Khrushchev were, as it happened, largely stage-managed. In a number of cases many of the invited participants were not even members of the party, let alone of the Central Committee itself. Some scholars, nonetheless, saw the Central Committee developing, during these years, into a kind of 'parliament of the party',<sup>32</sup> its proceedings a national and continuing seminar on the key issues of public concern—education, agriculture, the Virgin Lands, or foreign policy.

In terms of indicators of activity (Table 4.4), the Central Committee plenum under Khrushchev was certainly a different institution to what it had been in the late Stalin years or what it would be under Brezhnev. Generally between 1953 and 1964 the interval between one plenum and the next was no more than six or seven months, although there was a gap of ten months between the February 1956 plenum (which met immediately after the 20th Congress to confirm the central organs of the party) and the December 1956 plenum.

Attendance at plenums was generally quite full. It was rare for more than for five to ten members and five to ten candidates to be absent; in other words, typical attendance was 90 to 95 per cent. Even at the June 1957 and October 1964 plenums, which were held at short notice and under unusual conditions, about 90 per cent of members were present.<sup>33</sup> Not simply were meetings more frequent: there were more contributors to discussion. The peak years, in terms of meetings, were 1955, 1957, and 1958; in terms of speakers, 1959 and 1962 (in each of which there were 105 contributions to discussion). The number of decisions, again, was at its highest in 1958 and 1961; and all of these totals were higher than for any post-war year before the start of *perestroika*.

This is not the place to discuss the details of plenums, but they were used as an arena for announcing and 'discussing' new initiatives, especially in the Khrushchev years.<sup>34</sup> The *Sovnarkhoz* reform (decentralizing the economy) was

<sup>31</sup> Khrushchev, 'O kul'te lichnosti', 136, 163.

<sup>32</sup> For example J. D. B. Miller and T. H. Rigby (eds.), *The Disintegrating Monolith* (Canberra: Australian University Press, 1965), 40.

<sup>33</sup> 'Kak snimali N. S. Khrushcheva. Materialy plenuma TsK KPSS. Oktiabr' 1964 g.', *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1993, no. 1, p. 6; A. N. Iakovlev *et al.* (eds.), *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957: Stenogramma iun'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia', 1998), 24. See also published plenums: *Plenum Tsentral'nogo komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe izdatel'stvo, 1958, etc.)

<sup>34</sup> See Mark Kramer, 'Declassified Materials from CPSU Central Committee Plenums: Sources, Context, Highlights', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 10 (Mar. 1998), 7–25.

**Table 4.4.** CC activity, 1952–1966

	Days of meeting		Number of resolutions	
	Congress/Conference	CC	Adopted at plenums	Other resolutions
1952	10	1	1	2
1953	0	6	1	0
1954	0	12	2	6
1955	0	16	5	6
1956	12	5	2	10
1957	0	13	5	6
1958	0	13	7	4
1959	10	10	2	4
1960	0	5	2	4
1961	15	11	9	4
1962	0	10	2	9
1963	0	9	3	11
1964	0	8	2	2
1965	0	7	6	8
1966	11	9	5	6

*Source:* Compiled from *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza v rezoliutsiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK (1898–1988): Spravochnyi tom*, 3rd edn. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990).

launched at the February 1957 plenum, the abolition of the Machine-Tractor Stations at the February 1958 plenum, and the bifurcation of the regional party organizations at the November 1962 plenum. Some Central Committee meetings were devoted to particular issues, such as the December 1963 plenum on the chemicals industry. A plenum was evidently felt necessary (in July 1964) to replace Brezhnev with Mikoian as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.<sup>35</sup> One of the charges made against Khrushchev by M. A. Suslov in his keynote speech at the October 1964 plenum was that:

in the past few years we have not had proper—in the Leninist sense—plenums of the Central Committee, that is, which were convened for businesslike discussion of real problems and not for showy bluster [*paradnaia shumikba*]. What actually took place was not a Plenum of the CC but an all-union convention of five or six thousand people full of tributes to comrade Khrushchev.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> 'Kak snimali N. S. Khrushcheva', 18, n. 10. This plenum, however, which was held just before a Session of the Supreme Soviet, was not reported in the press; see also Barsukov, 'Khrushchevskie vremena', 277.

<sup>36</sup> 'Kak snimali N. S. Khrushcheva', 8. Khrushchev's son Sergei noted that not everyone liked such a 'massive conclave'; 'the apparatchiks felt they reduced the prestige of the plenum and eroded its significance'. See Sergei Khrushchev, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev* (Boston: Little Brown, 1990), 34.

The institution of the Central Committee plenum, for all its limitations and unanimous votes, was nonetheless very dangerous in political terms. Khrushchev appears to have used plenums to bypass his remaining opponents in the Presidium, which may explain the six plenums in 1958. A proposed plenum on ideology scheduled for June 1956 was called off at three days' notice.<sup>37</sup> The October 1964 'coup' may have been held partly to head off a proposed November plenum on Khrushchev's proposed theme of the 'intensification' of agriculture.<sup>38</sup> And at the October 1964 plenum it is perhaps significant that Khrushchev was not granted his request to address the plenum.<sup>39</sup>

Plenums also formed the background to a number of important political confrontations. The July 1953 plenum, mentioned in Chapter 3, confirmed the accepted fact of Beria's arrest. At the January 1955 plenum Malenkov was criticized by senior comrades, and the same thing happened to Molotov at the July 1955 plenum. The way was prepared for their removal as prime minister and foreign minister, respectively.<sup>40</sup> All three occasions were in effect the removal of members of the collective leadership by the Central Committee, but on the initiative of the *Presidium* majority. The events of 1957 and 1964 were different: in the first case the plenum overruled the Presidium majority, in the second the plenum removed the supreme leader.

All this activity makes it reasonable to think of the 1950s and early 1960s as a kind of silver age for the Central Committee as an institution, and for its members as individuals. It was not perhaps comparable to the golden age of the revolutionary period and the early 1920s, but much better than the impotence of the Stalin period. The events of the June 1957 plenum mark the peak of the Central Committee elite's power, at least since the beginning of the 1920s.<sup>41</sup> In a series of top-level meetings starting on 18 June 1957 Khrushchev's opponents tried to obtain a Presidium decision removing him. There were certainly recent precedents for such an 'informal' change. Khrushchev himself first became a Central Committee secretary in December 1949 by a 'correspondence ballot' (*oprosom*) of the Central Committee membership, that is, without a plenum. Although the 'correspondence ballot' was a tool exploited by Stalin—most notoriously to ravage the Central Committee in 1937–8—it was used by his successors as late as 6 June 1953, when L. G. Mel'nikov was removed as a Presidium candidate. Khrushchev's

<sup>37</sup> *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich*, 163, 745, n. 9.

<sup>38</sup> 'Kak snimali N. S. Khrushcheva', 18, n. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>40</sup> 'Plenum Transcripts, 1955–1957', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 10 (Mar. 1998), 34–43.

<sup>41</sup> See N. Barsukov, 'Proval "antipartiinoi gruppy": iium'skii plenum TsK KPSS 1957 goda', *Kommunist*, 1990, no. 8, pp. 99–108. A great deal of information is given in the recently published protocol of the plenum, *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich*. The fullest Western account, still of interest, is Roger Pethybridge, *A Key to Soviet Politics: The Crisis of the 'Anti-Party' Group* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962).

enemies were caught, however, by the proviso that 'Leninist norms' and the party rules were now scrupulously to be obeyed. According to the rules, secretaries (and Presidium members) were to be chosen by the Central Committee—presumably meeting in a plenum. Stalin had been elected general secretary at a plenum, in April 1922, following the 11th Congress. Khrushchev was elected first secretary at the September 1953 plenum. No doubt if Khrushchev's opponents had secured a Presidium majority they would eventually have summoned a plenum to confirm both his removal and the appointment of a replacement. A model was the removal of Beria—arrested at a Presidium meeting on 26 June 1953, but formally removed as a Presidium member nearly two weeks later, at a Central Committee plenum on 7 July 1953. The problem was that the 1957 conspirators did not arrange the plenum in advance—as those of 1964 did. When confronted by a delegation of the Central Committee rank and file on 21 June 1957 Bulganin offered a plenum within two weeks, but by then it was too late.<sup>42</sup>

The key fact of the situation in June 1957 was that the Presidium was so divided as to be incapable of decisive action. The anti-Khrushchev faction was the largest group, but only three or four Presidium full members were prepared to push matters to a conclusion. This faction was, in turn, opposed from the first by certain Presidium *candidate* members, including Marshal Zhukov. The Central Committee was given time to take action. On 21 June twenty members went to the Presidium meeting, with a letter signed by eighty of their colleagues:<sup>43</sup>

We, members of the CC of the CPSU, have become aware that the Presidium of the CC has been in unbroken session for four days. We have also become aware that you are considering the question of the leadership of the Presidium of the CC and of the Secretariat. Questions of such importance for both our whole party and for the country must not be hidden from members of the Plenum of the CC. In connection with this we ask that a Plenum of the CC be called immediately and to put this question to the consideration of a Plenum of the CC. We, members of the CC, cannot stand aside from questions of the leadership of our party.

The Presidium at first refused to admit the delegation, but the arrival of more and more Central Committee members meant that the Presidium had to agree to the opening of a plenum on the 22nd. The rest, as they say, is history. In effect a full plenum had gathered—121 of 130 members and ninety-four of 122 candidates. By the end, on 29 June, Khrushchev had confirmed his own position, ejected his four most active opponents from the Presidium (and the Central Committee), and secured a resolution from the plenum condemning them as the 'anti-party group'. As well as policy mistakes in foreign and economic affairs and in ideology, the 'group' were also condemned in the resolution for their methods. '[T]his group sought through anti-party factional methods to replace the personnel of leading party organs, which had been elected at a Plenum of the CC CPSU';

<sup>42</sup> Barsukov, 'Proval "antipartiinoi gruppy"', 102.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 101 f.

they had 'resorted to intrigue and constructed a secret plot against the Central Committee', and had acted contrary to the current party rules and to the 1921 Resolution on party unity. The 1957 resolution stated that not one member of the Central Committee elite spoke in support the 'anti-party group' at the plenum and that there was unanimous opposition to it. This seems largely to be confirmed by the now-published protocol—if one leaves out the speeches of members of the group themselves. Even Malenkov and Kaganovich voted for the final resolution, although Molotov abstained.<sup>44</sup>

It is remarkable that Kaganovich, Malenkov, and Molotov could not generate any active support at the Central Committee plenum. There are several explanations. Khrushchev had a range of opponents, but they were divided among themselves. Kaganovich, Malenkov, and Molotov were already discredited. It must have been clear which way the wind was blowing, and there was a race to join the victors. The Central Committee resolution was also 'unanimous' partly because it amounted to a substantial compromise; it made no attack on the 'soft' critics of Khrushchev's economic and administrative policies, men like Bulganin, Per-vukhin, Saburov, and Voroshilov. But there were other factors, and as T. H. Rigby has argued, the Malenkov group made a basic mistake in rejecting the accountability of the Presidium to the Central Committee; for rank-and-file Central Committee members 'a vote for the [anti-Khrushchev group] therefore became a vote against their own collective rights and standing'.<sup>45</sup>

Although Khrushchev was the immediate personal beneficiary of the events of 1957, there was certainly an important element of 'bottom-top' tension. The broader party elite, the 'barons', wanted more power vis-à-vis the supreme leadership. D. F. Ustinov, then minister for the Defence Industry, complained at the plenum about the Presidium's initial refusal to receive a delegation (i.e. on 21 June 1957): 'I do not understand how it could be that our highest party organ, the Plenum of the CC, elected the comrades to the Presidium of the CC, and then that the Presidium would not admit the comrades, delegated from members of the CC, and not some group of non-party people or conspirators. We had gathered, by that time, some fifty-three people.'

Otto Kuusinen, head of state of the Karelian ASSR, made a head-on attack against the anti-Khrushchev group: 'Behind the back of the Plenum of the

<sup>44</sup> *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TSK*, 9th edn. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1985), ix. 184–9; Barsukov, 'Proval "antipartiinnoi gruppy"', 106. The term 'anti-party group' is used for sake of convenience, although it was an inaccurate and pejorative term devised by the victors. The 'Malenkov group' is a possible alternative, but it is misleading; there were substantial differences among Khrushchev's opponents, and it is debatable whether Malenkov was the leader of the June 1957 events. An alternative and more accurate term would be the 'anti-Khrushchev group'.

<sup>45</sup> Rigby, 'Khrushchev and the Resuscitation', 161. Khrushchev's biographer also notes that '[a] vote for the Presidium majority at this stage would have been a vote against the collective rights and status of the Central Committee itself' (Tompson, *Khrushchev*, 180–1).



Central Committee they wanted to carry out a coup in the party leadership.' Khrushchev himself made much of the rights of the Central Committee. 'Comrades,' he declared on the first day of the plenum, 'we, members of the Presidium of the CC, we are servants of the Plenum, and the Plenum is our master.'<sup>46</sup>

The events of October 1964 mark a second peak of the Central Committee's activities. A majority in the Presidium had agreed to unseat Khrushchev; on 12 October the Presidium voted to summon the first secretary home from holiday to discuss important policy issues and simultaneously called Central Committee members and candidates for a plenum—anticipating a plenum scheduled by Khrushchev for November. On the 13th the Presidium met again, with Khrushchev present, and his resignation was demanded. The first secretary initially resisted this, but on the 14th gave in and signed a pre-prepared resignation.

From the point of view of the rules, the crucial thing was that Khrushchev had 'agreed' to resign; had he not done so the Presidium could not have removed him. However, a plenum could take such a step, and one was convened on the 14th, attended by 153 of 169 Central Committee members and 130 of 149 candidates. In his preliminary speech Brezhnev concluded by condemning Khrushchev's irresponsible policies: 'The Presidium of the CC CPSU, keeping in mind the unacceptable situation which had been brought about, unanimously recognized it as necessary to convene an urgent Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party and to put this question for consideration and resolution by the Plenum.'<sup>47</sup>

The October 1964 plenum was the only case of the 'legal' removal of a supreme party leader. To some extent it was an example of 'traditional' Presidium/Politburo politics. Khrushchev was removed because he was outnumbered in the Presidium; this was simply ratified by the plenum. Even in 1957 Khrushchev won partly because he had sufficient strength in the Presidium to delay a decision. On the other hand, in 1964 Khrushchev did not have the option of appealing to the plenum as he had in 1957, because he had lost the confidence of the rank-and-file Central Committee members. The conspirators of 1957 did not consider calling a plenum; the conspirators in 1964 called an immediate plenum because they knew that the Central Committee would support them against Khrushchev.

As already mentioned, a fundamental question about this period is why the Central Committee elite supported Khrushchev against a Presidium majority in June 1957, and then rejected him in October 1964. Although the first episode was the more dramatic it was perhaps less puzzling. The first secretary had control through the Central Committee Secretariat of many high-level appointments to Central Committee-level posts in 1953–5, and the holders of those posts became Central Committee members at the 20th Congress in 1956. But if he had so much patronage power, why did his comrades dare to conspire against him in

<sup>46</sup> *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich*, 32, 317, 330.

<sup>47</sup> 'Kak snimali N. S. Khrushcheva', 8, 15.

1957? And why, after seven more years of patronage and two more congresses (the 21st and 22nd), and after a substantial turnover of elite personnel, was Khrushchev not able to keep the support of the Central Committee against a new group of plotters?

Some of the answers are obvious and have been recounted on other occasions. Khrushchev's age, and his overbearing and erratic style, now told against him. Khrushchev had made policy mistakes—alienating the economic managers with his economic experiments and failures, the military industrialists and generals with his talk of arms reduction, the party apparat in general with the 1962 party reform. The supreme party executive organs were always crucial positions in the struggle for power, and in 1964 Khrushchev seems to have had only one—cautious—supporter (Mikoian) in the Presidium; in 1957 the Presidium had been evenly divided. The émigré Sovietologist Avtorkhanov argued that the Secretariat—'the permanently active sole repository of supreme power'—was the key in both cases: in its abortive coup of 1957 the Presidium 'talking-shop' had 'only moral authority', while 1964 'was engineered by the Central Committee Secretariat'.<sup>48</sup> (Avtorkhanov's account does not explain why Khrushchev, who was *head* of the secretarial apparatus, lost out. Brezhnev had only been a Central Committee secretary since June 1963 and until the following summer was still chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; however, Shelepin and Suslov, prime movers in the plot, were Central Committee secretaries.)

But there is more to the explanation than this. The Central Committee elite can be seen as a broad group with self-conscious interests of its own. There had been an element of this even in the 1920s and early 1930s, and Stalin and his group could only deal with it by extreme political terror. Violence—and even the threat of it—was not available after 1953. Any supreme leadership—that of the anti-Khrushchev group in 1957 or of Khrushchev in 1964—which could not keep the confidence of the Central Committee was vulnerable. Khrushchev had been going with the grain of elite feeling in his resistance to his opponents in 1957. More recently R. G. Pikhoia has argued that the July 1957 plenum was a victory for the interests of the apparatus as much as for Khrushchev.<sup>49</sup> Patronage power was much more limited after the end of the Terror. Khrushchev could not control through patronage his own Presidium, let alone the broader Central Committee elite. The rules of the game had changed. In 1964 Khrushchev was going against the grain. And it was not just the general interests of the wider elite that counted,

<sup>48</sup> A. Avtorkhanov, *The Communist Party Apparatus* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1966), 224.

<sup>49</sup> R. G. Pikhoia argued that Khrushchev's allies in 1957 had been the *partapparat* (party apparatus), who hoped to secure stability through Khrushchev and saw the attack on him as first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU as an attack on them as first secretaries of republics and regions. '[T]he real victor [at the July 1957 plenum] was the party apparatus.' Khrushchev was in fact its hostage. The fall of Marshal Zhukov in October 1957—a critic of party control of the army—would be another victory for them (R. G. Pikhoia, 'O vnutripoliticheskoi bor'be v Sovetskom rukovodstve. 1945–1958 gg.', *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, 1995, no. 6, pp. 13 f.).

but also the generational factor, above all the rise to predominance of the 'second generation'. Khrushchev was the last of Stalin's 'clients' and also the last top-level leader from among the first generation—after his remaining contemporaries had been removed with the Central Committee's help in 1957. Brezhnev and his fellow-conspirators in 1964 were representatives of the second generation.<sup>50</sup>

The Central Committee members we looked at earlier in this chapter—Andreev, Patolichev, Baibakov, Zhurin, Novikov, and Egorychev—all seem to have followed the Central Committee majority in the crises of 1957 and 1964. Andreev was retired by the time Khrushchev fell, but at the June 1957 plenum he launched into an extraordinary attack on the 'anti-party group', couched in the language of the Purges. Their plot was 'the gravest crime' and deserved 'the most severe punishment'; Andreev compared them to Stalin's enemies, the Trotskyists, Rights, and Zinovievites. As for Patolichev, the anti-Khrushchev group apparently thought about him as a reliable candidate for the post of head of the KGB, but he put himself at the forefront of the attack on them. He had already fallen out with Kaganovich in the Ukraine in the 1940s, and he had been sent to the Foreign Ministry in 1956 to reduce Molotov's power base. He was one of the twenty who went to the Presidium on 21 June 1957 demanding a plenum. Nevertheless, his career was still sidelined, and he was very critical of Khrushchev's 'subjectivism' in agriculture in his memoirs. He must have been content with the first secretary's fall.<sup>51</sup> Baibakov's assessment was equally mixed: 'I value Nikita very highly. But only his first five years.' It was a technocratic judgement. Baibakov made little comment about Khrushchev's role in de-Stalinization, but praised him for the Virgin Lands, extending the cotton crop, converting the railways to diesel, and promoting prefabricated-concrete construction of flats.<sup>52</sup> Baibakov had been one of the beneficiaries of Khrushchev's rise, moving to central planning in mid-1955. He backed Khrushchev in 1957. Immediately after Kaganovich, his pre-war boss, was expelled from the Central Committee Baibakov was sent to a cell meeting in an attempt to bring about Kaganovich's removal from the party; in the event the 'Iron Commissar' was expelled only in 1962. Baibakov, however, had by 1958 fallen out of favour with Khrushchev for defending centralization, and he heartily disliked 'the First's' public barracking of his subordinates. Although he was brought back to Moscow in 1963, Khrushchev came to believe he was part of a group of conspiring leaders. Baibakov implied he was not party to any plotting against Khrushchev, but given his worsening relations with the first secretary, his

<sup>50</sup> Elena Zubkova has made a contrast between the 'middle generation', of which Khrushchev (and Malenkov) were representatives, and the 'young' apparatus; see E. Iu. Zubkova, 'Malenkov i Khrushchev: Lichnyi faktor v politike poslestalinskogo rukovodstva', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 1995, no. 4, pp. 103–5.

<sup>51</sup> *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich*, 96, 99, 168, 170–7, 346–51, 477. N. S. Patolichev, *Sovest'iu svoei ne postupis'* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995), 163 f., 247. Unfortunately Patolichev's memoirs end in 1956.

<sup>52</sup> Baibakov interview, SEP. Since Baibakov had been directly involved in drafting Khrushchev's early economic reforms it not surprising that he remembered them positively, see Baibakov, *Sorok let*, 214.

dismay at the later economic 'miracle cures', and Khrushchev's open criticism in the Presidium, he felt he could not work with him. He certainly welcomed the events of October 1964.

Of the second-level leaders, Zhurin appears from his own account to be a narrow 'true believer', but was at least honest in being favourable about Brezhnev. When interviewed nearly thirty years after the event, he still repeated the old official explanation about October 1964: 'The Plenum granted the request of N. S. Khrushchev to be released from his responsibilities.'<sup>53</sup> Zhurin, however, like Baibakov, seems to have gained a positive impression of Khrushchev because of the attention which he paid to agriculture, especially in the Virgin Lands. Novikov stressed the need for discipline and 'tempo', drawing parallels with the war, as though the main goal of socialism was the maximum production of armaments. He had no special love for Khrushchev: 'Brezhnev, when he was well, was no worse than Khrushchev, and neither was smarter than Stalin.' On the other hand, Novikov had personal memories of the repression, and felt Stalin's subordinates were more guilty than he (Stalin) was.<sup>54</sup> This must have made him critical of the 'old guard' of Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich in 1957; in any event, he may well have followed the lead of his patron Kozlov, who backed Khrushchev during the crisis of the 'anti-party group'. Novikov was certainly critical of Khrushchev in the latter part of his period in power and, as we know, he was sacked by him in 1962. He was privy to the 1964 conspiracy, and drafted speeches critical of Khrushchev for himself and his patron D. F. Ustinov at the time of the October plenum.

Although Egorychev was not on the Central Committee in 1957 he evidently agreed with Khrushchev's resistance to the 'anti-party group'. They attempted 'to return everything to Stalin's time and methods'; '[t]hey did not have the right to remove [Khrushchev], since it was not they but the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU who appointed him'.<sup>55</sup> As first secretary of the Bauman district in 1957 he may have followed the incumbent Moscow city committee first secretary, Ekaterina Furtseva, who was a Khrushchev supporter. Egorychev was nevertheless pleased with Khrushchev's removal in October 1964 and had been prepared to speak against him at the plenum. For Egorychev, support for Khrushchev in 1957 and rejection of him in 1964 were consistent. It was *Khrushchev* who had strayed from the principles of the 20th (and 22nd) Congresses—because he had been not been able to free himself from his Stalinist legacy. Egorychev even claimed to have stiffened Brezhnev's resolve at a critical moment: 'We sincerely believed', he recalled in 1989, 'in the honesty of Brezhnev and the people close to him'; 'Now I understand that that was naive . . .'<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> N. I. Zhurin interview, SEP.

<sup>54</sup> Novikov interview, SEP.

<sup>55</sup> 'Napravlen poslom', 7.

<sup>56</sup> 'Ibid.', 7. In fact Egorychev took a number of quite conservative positions in the early Brezhnev years.

In explaining the developments of the Khrushchev period, the personal successes and failures of the first secretary should not be minimized. Traditional Kremlinological studies are right to make much of the conflict within the top leadership in the 'golden triangle' of the Presidium, the Central Committee Secretariat, and the leadership of the Council of Ministers. As for the Central Committee, there is no denying that its power as a collective—both in the plenum and more broadly—was less than what was laid out in the party rules. The Central Committee did not really serve as a 'party parliament'. There were no closely fought votes in plenums, and there is no evidence in the published plenums of major open debate on non-leadership issues. The June 1957 and October 1964 plenums were extreme cases, but even in 1957 no one attempted to defend the Malenkov group, and no one at the October 1964 plenum tried to defend Khrushchev. Indeed, the only example of a dissenting vote appears to have been Molotov's refusal to support his own expulsion in 1957. As an institution the Central Committee was indeed a 'court of appeal' from the Politburo, but it was a court of last resort.

On the other hand, as Graeme Gill has pointed out, 'institutionalization' was a dimension of this period which is easily overlooked,<sup>57</sup> and the Central Committee plenum should be seen as an institution in the evolving system of government. And it is possible to go one step further and say that a fuller understanding of the period also requires looking at the ruling elite who were the members of this institution. In the 1950s, with Stalin's death and the beginning of the 'Khrushchev era', the elite really came into its own again. Moshe Lewin's argument about this is both a powerful one and relevant to our study, although his point of reference was a somewhat larger group than the Central Committee elite. 'Stalinism was the big obstacle to the transformation of the upper layers of bureaucracy into a ruling class.' Only after 1953 did the bureaucracy become tenured. Using a historical analogy, Lewin argued that Russia moved from despotism to bureaucratic absolutism in 1953. For Lewin, what Gorbachev called the 'command-administrative system' was essentially a legacy not of Stalinism but of the post-Stalin period. The bureaucracy was the gravedigger of Stalinism, but also of the '-ism' of any other leader who tried comprehensively to challenge its power.<sup>58</sup> V. N. Naumov,

<sup>57</sup> Graeme Gill, 'Khrushchev and Systemic Development', in McCauley, *Khrushchev and Khrushchevism*, 30–45.

<sup>58</sup> Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* (New York: New Press, 1994), 73, 91, 182, 187, 202 f., 207. What is perhaps insufficiently emphasized by Lewin is the way that high Stalinism, i.e. the developments which took place from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, was the deviation rather than the starting-point. The consolidation of the power of the bureaucracy after the early 1950s and 1960s actually continued a process that had begun in the 1920s, and which Stalin had tried to interrupt. Russia had, using Lewin's analogy, moved *from* bureaucratic absolutism to despotism in the 1930s, and a major purpose of the despot's purges had been to break the explicit and implicit power of the larger elite. The elite had been physically, indeed bloodily, shifted from a tenured status in the 1920s and early 1930s to an untenured one in the *Ezhovshchina*. Another qualification is that the revived tenure of the elite dated from the 1940s rather than the early 1950s, and in any event those who won tenure were Stalinist appointees of the 1930s.

one of the new post-Soviet historians of the period, made essentially the same point, although his terms of reference were the regional secretaries. '[T]he local party bureaucracy became an independent force. . . . It showed itself to be a group with its own interests, with a significantly independent position, and which kept its significance and independence even after Khrushchev's victory. This force could not be ignored. And when Khrushchev tried to free himself from dependence on them, to break their strength, then that confrontation ended with his defeat.'<sup>59</sup> Khrushchev himself had unwittingly recognized this. Burlatskii was present at a high-level 1953 meeting when Malenkov had recited a catalogue of criticisms of the 'bureaucratism' of the regime. 'All that is, of course, true, Georgii Maksimilianovich,' piped up Khrushchev in the long silence that followed the speech: 'But the apparatus is our foundation [*No apparat—eto nasha opora*].' Khrushchev was applauded, stormily and at length, by the massed ranks of the apparatus.<sup>60</sup>

In terms of any overall assessment of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, a focus on the Central Committee elite would indicate limitations to both his powers and his achievements. The end of arbitrary Stalinist terror meant that for the first time since 1937–8 the elite had actively to be cultivated. It was very much in Khrushchev's interests to present his policies to the elite every six months or so. The 'legal' powers of the Central Committee were used to bring about leadership changes in 1957 and 1964, although these changes would not have been possible without the initiative of the top-level oligarchs in the Presidium. Equally, it would be a mistake to give Khrushchev sole credit for the greater security of the top elite; this was not a bequest by a beneficent first secretary but something all members of the elite worked towards in one way or another.

In addition, another sign of the limitation of Khrushchev's power was the permanence of the existing structures. Whatever reforms he may have attempted in other parts of the Soviet regime, Khrushchev took the system of Central Committee representation as it had been evolved under Stalin in the late 1920s and early 1930s and did not substantially change it. He did encourage more rapid turnover of individual office-holders—regional first secretaries, ministers, and so on. This was necessary to ensure both the efficiency of the elite and—as far as possible—political loyalty to himself. But Khrushchev did not fundamentally change the underlying job-slot *system*, in the way that Gorbachev would change it in 1990, and that Stalin had to some extent changed it in the 1920s. Khrushchev also did not bring in a whole new cohort of office-holders. Stalin in the late 1930s and Gorbachev fifty years later brought about a qualitative change in the nature of the Central Committee elite by self-consciously removing a generation with particular experiences and replacing it with another. As for Khrushchev, as one Russian observer later put it, '[i]n reality, the political elite remained as it had been, within

<sup>59</sup> Naumov, 'Bor'ba N. S. Khrushcheva', 28.

<sup>60</sup> Burlatskii, *Vozbdi i sovetniki*, 27 f.

the existing paradigm'.<sup>61</sup> In elite terms, rather than being a break, the Khrushchev period actually fits in at a point equidistant between the fault-lines of 1937–8 and the early 1980s, in the middle of what could be called the era of the second generation.

There was indeed turnover of individual Central Committee members during the Khrushchev years, but the new members of the elite were generally of the same generation as the people they were replacing. The age, social origin, and nationality structure of the Central Committee membership did not change substantially, even between the chronological extremes of the period, 1952 and 1966. The elite members at the beginning and end of the period can be said to have had the same background: born in a peasant environment, caught up in the mobilization of the Five Year Plans, given responsibility during and after the Purges, and holding important posts in the Second World War. This elite which fully coalesced during Khrushchev's period—and which overthrew him—would go on to run the USSR for another two decades. In terms of the social history of the elite, the Khrushchev years were a period of continuity rather than of change. This partly explains why as a reformist leader he failed to achieve his other objectives, and why his successors behaved as they did.

<sup>61</sup> O. V. Volobuev, 'Vnutrennie motivy politicheskikh aktsii', in V. T. Loginov (ed.), *XX s"ezd. Materialy konferentsii k 40-letiiu XX s"ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Izd. 'Aprel'-85', 1996), 90–1. '[A]s Stalin needed his own party (remember the purging of the 'Leninist guard'. i.e. the generation which took shape in a different period?), so Khrushchev too needed his own party, purged of people loyal to Stalin and Stalinism. . . .' Because he could not create 'his own party' it was easy to undo Khrushchev's reform process.

## 5

The Elite Consolidates,  
1966–1985

The present style of party leadership gives us a sense of confidence and multiplies our energies. There is no haste and fuss. The Central Committee Presidium combines exactingness towards cadres with trust and respect for them. Plenary sessions of the Central Committee are now being conducted in a businesslike manner, without noise, pomp, or bombast.

D. A. Kunaev, 23rd Party Congress, March–April 1966

Witnessing the titanic activities of Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev, reading the records of his meetings, his fundamental works and speeches on foreign and domestic problems, you feel genuine joy and pride in recognizing that at the head of party and state stands a man in whom are organically combined the broadest erudition, Leninist principle, proletarian resolve, revolutionary audacity, high humanism, and rare diplomatic flexibility. (*Stormy, prolonged applause.*)

Eduard Shevardnadze, June 1980 Central Committee plenum

After the hectic experimentation of Khrushchev, the Brezhnev years were a period of stability for Soviet society and for its elite in particular. At the earliest opportunity, in 1966, Khrushchev's innovations in party management were discarded: party committees were reintegrated, ending their division into agricultural and industrial sections; the party leadership became a general secretaryship, reverting to the older name; and the Presidium once again became a Politburo, to the 'shouts of approval' and 'stormy applause' of delegates to the 23rd Congress.<sup>1</sup> Above all, the rules on compulsory turnover, introduced in 1961, were eliminated entirely. The emphasis was rather upon 'stability of cadres': there were fewer changes in the Central Committee and in the Soviet government more generally, and at the 26th Party Congress in 1981, unprecedentedly, the entire Politburo and Secretariat was re-elected without change. The significance of these changes was not lost on grateful members of the elite, as the Kazakh first

<sup>1</sup> XXIII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 29 marta—8 aprelia 1966 goda. *Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1966), i. 98.



secretary Dinmukhamed Kunaev made clear in his contribution to the 1966 Party Congress. There was 'no haste and fuss' now, he told delegates; the new party leadership combined 'exactingness towards cadres' with 'trust and respect for them'.<sup>2</sup>

For Russian citizens, looking back in the early 1990s, it was at this time that they had 'lived best'.<sup>3</sup> National income, at least on the official figures, doubled between 1960 and 1970 and had more than trebled by 1980. Industrial output increased even more rapidly. There were recurring problems with agriculture, despite a grandiose 'food programme' launched in 1982; and the economic growth-rate, after a rise in the late 1960s, had slipped back to virtually zero by the start of the 1980s. But the real incomes of ordinary citizens more than doubled over the two decades, and the wages paid to collective farmers more than quadrupled. And the society itself was changing. More people, for a start, lived in towns or cities (nearly two-thirds of the population by the early 1980s). There were more graduates, more hospital beds, more motor cars, and very many more televisions. And there were improvements in the Soviet diet, with greater consumption of meat, fish, and fruit and a lower intake of the starchy products that had been a mainstay for many decades. Khrushchev's grandiose promise of communism 'in the main' by 1980 was quietly forgotten; but the new doctrine of developed socialism promised a socialist consumer society in the near future, with stable prices, full employment, and comprehensive welfare provision. The USSR, meanwhile, achieved strategic parity with the United States; its global influence appeared to be increasing; and it led the world in its scientific research, its Olympic gold medals, and its exploration of outer space.

These years of stability and material advance had a number of consequences for the political elite. There were opportunities for nepotism, as parents sought to guarantee their children the same kinds of advantages (a subject we consider in Chapter 7). The Central Committee itself swelled in size; and a cult developed once again around the general secretary, partly instigated by Brezhnev himself—there were 'organizational measures', for instance, to ensure that his speeches were applauded sufficiently—and partly encouraged by those to whom his protection was important.<sup>4</sup> The elections that took place to the Central Committee in these years were themselves an indicator of his increasing dominance: in 1966 and

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 149. The Krasnodar kraikom first secretary, writing in *Pravda*, was another to voice his support for the ending of the policy of 'mass transfers' (ibid., ii. 128).

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. *Sogodnia*, 24 Jan. 1995, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 10, 1989, p. 18 ('organizational measures'). At the 23rd Party Congress in 1966 there were 25 seconds of applause for Brezhnev, compared with 4.6 for other members of the Politburo; by the 25th Congress in 1976 Brezhnev was applauded for 42 seconds, but other members of the Politburo were down to 2.7 seconds each. The difference would have been 'even more impressive if it were expressed not only in terms of duration but also in terms of volume' (*Radio Liberty Research Report* 128/76 (6 March 1976), 13, 16). On the leadership cult more generally see Graeme Gill, 'The Soviet Leader Cult: Reflections on the Structure of Leadership in the Soviet Union', *British Journal of Political Science*, 10: 2 (Apr. 1980), 167–86.

1971 the new Central Committees were simply listed in alphabetical order, but in 1976 there was 'stormy, prolonged applause' as Brezhnev's name was announced before all the others, and by 1981 there were 'hurrahs' as well as 'prolonged applause' as it was announced that his re-election had been unanimous.<sup>5</sup> Abuse of office, within as well as outside the Brezhnev family, became increasingly frequent; and in the outlying and non-Russian areas entire networks of 'family circles' developed around long-serving first secretaries—Kunaev in Kazakhstan, Usabaliev in Kirgizia, Gapurov in Turkmenia, Shcherbitskii in the Ukraine, Rashidov in Uzbekistan. When economic performance began to deteriorate in the late 1970s, mechanisms of accountability, including the Central Committee, had been marginalized and an immobile and sometimes corrupt elite found its position increasingly difficult to justify.

### A Stabilizing Elite

Brezhnev's elite was, first of all, an expanding one. Altogether 740 individuals were elected to the Central Committee in 1966, 1971, 1976, and 1981, more than a third of its membership over the entire Soviet period. The party itself was increasing in number at the same time, from 12.5 million at his first congress in 1966 to 17.5 million in the early 1980s, by which time it had become a massive presence in Soviet society, with about a fifth of all males over the age of 30 and a third of all graduates within its ranks.<sup>6</sup> An increase in Central Committee numbers reflected the fact that the party itself had become more inclusive. And it reflected a changing society, one in which there were more ministries and state committees, more academic institutes, more public bodies of all kinds. It was natural that they should seek representation for their key officials at the highest levels of party decision-making; natural also that the party should wish to incorporate their expertise and extend its influence to the sections of society that they represented. Beyond this again, members of the leadership sought to strengthen their position by bringing forward clients from the area or institution for which they were responsible. Together, these pressures forced a steady enlargement of the Central Committee and a fall in the proportion of its members that were replaced at successive congresses; unlike in Western societies, there were no general elections to enforce change, and unlike in earlier periods of Soviet history, there were no wars, purges, or 'revolutions from above'.

<sup>5</sup> See respectively *XXV s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz 24 fevralia–5 marta 1976 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1976), ii. 309 (the election of other members of the leadership was 'warmly received'; Brezhnev's own election had been unanimous); and *XXVI s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz 23 fevralia–3 marta 1981 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1981), ii. 242 (there was merely 'applause' for the election of other members of the leadership).

<sup>6</sup> Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 128.

The Central Committee, in fact, reached its largest extent during the Brezhnev years. The number of full members in 1981, Brezhnev's last congress, was 319, the largest in the party's entire history (until 1990); the proportion of members that retained its positions at each congress was also the highest in the party's history, particularly in 1976 and 1981 (see Table 5.1). The holdover rate in 1966 was at first sight surprising, given that the election of a new Central Committee provided an opportunity for the post-Khrushchev leadership to consolidate its position; it may reflect the limited degree of change that had by this time taken place in regional first secretaryships and other positions whose holders had come to expect Central Committee status. There was a similar holdover rate in 1971 as the Brezhnev group consolidated their control of such positions (Brezhnev, by this time, had established a clear pre-eminence within the leadership); this was followed by a further increase in 1976, as those who had gained their positions under the new leadership became dominant. The proportion of Central Committee members that had been elected at an earlier congress was at least two-thirds at each of the Brezhnev congresses, and as many as 43 per cent of the Central Committee that had been elected in 1966 were still there in 1981 (of those still alive, an even more substantial 56 per cent were re-elected for a third time in that year). Central Committee membership, by the early 1980s, could reasonably be described as a 'life peerage'.<sup>7</sup>

What kind of individuals were being elected and re-elected to the Central Committee under Leonid Brezhnev? This was, as might be expected, the era of the 'Brezhnev generation', the 'class of '38' whose coming to power and characteristics have been discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 4. Our 'second generation', born in the period 1901 and 1920, were much the largest cohort within the Central Committee until the 26th Congress in 1981, and even then they made up the larger share of full members, 167 out of 319 (details are given in Table 5.3). The second generation had formed the predominant group in the late Stalin period, and also under Khrushchev. Its continuing predominance meant that the Central Committee was now an ageing elite. By the late 1970s there was no member aged less than 40, and the largest single group of members were in their sixties; the average age had risen by 1981 to 62, which was beyond the normal retirement age. More than a third, by this time, had been born before the October Revolution, and four had been born in the previous century. The ageing of the Central Committee was not simply a result of the fact that the continuing membership was becoming more elderly; it was a result even more directly of the increasing age of new members. In terms of 'life experiences', nonetheless, there were few who had an active memory of the Revolution and Civil War, or even of the mixed economy

<sup>7</sup> Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1980), 64. According to Thomas W. Casstevens and James R. Ozinga, 'The Soviet Central Committee Since Stalin: A Longitudinal View', *American Journal of Political Science*, 18: 3 (Aug. 1974), 559–68, these patterns of political turnover were in fact relatively similar to those of parliamentary systems.

**Table 5.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1961–1986

Congress	22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th
	Oct. 1961	Mar.–Apr. 1966	Mar.–Apr. 1971	Feb.–Mar. 1976	Feb.–Mar. 1981	Feb.–Mar. 1986
Full members	175	195	241	287	319	307
Candidate members	155	165	155	139	151	170
Total members/ candidates	330	360	396	426	470	477
In previous CC	127	240	262	315	333	259
Not in previous CC	203	120	134	111	137	218
In next CC	240	262	315	333	259	58
Not in next CC	90	98	81	93	211	419
Turnover (%)	50	27	27	20	22	45

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected.

**Table 5.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1961–1986

	1961 CC		1966 CC		1971 CC		1976 CC		1981 CC		1986 CC	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Central party	26	8	27	8	26	7	32	8	44	9	43	9
Central state	55	17	77	21	87	22	103	24	114	24	113	24
Republic party	30	9	31	9	30	8	28	7	32	7	34	7
Republic state	33	11	38	11	36	9	36	8	36	8	33	7
Regional party	93	28	95	26	105	27	111	26	112	24	115	24
Regional state	12	4	6	2	6	2	7	2	4	1	4	1
Military	31	9	32	9	32	8	29	7	36	8	36	8
Police	1	0	1	0	3	1	4	1	4	1	5	1
Diplomatic	15	4	16	4	21	5	20	5	22	5	23	5
Media/Science/Arts	18	5	15	4	22	6	29	7	27	6	27	6
Production	16	5	22	6	28	7	27	6	39	8	44	9
TOTAL	330	100	360	100	396	100	426	100	470	100	477	100

*Notes:* ‘Central state’ excludes ministers for the armed forces and foreign affairs, but includes trade union officials. ‘Republic party’ refers to *union* republics. ‘Regions’ include level of oblast’, krai, ASSR, AO, as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. ‘Diplomatic’ includes Foreign Ministry officials and ambassadors.

and relative openness of the New Economic Policy; the second generation had been only children then. The Purges had a longer impact, as it was only in 1986 that fewer than half of the Central Committee had been adults in 1937, when repression was at its most intense. The Second World War was a much more

formative influence, with well over 80 per cent of the Central Committee, even in Brezhnev's last years, in their adulthood by 1945. There was a basis here, clearly, for the ceremonies that took place on 9 May every year, marking 'victory over Fascist Germany'; and a basis too for the emphasis that began to be placed upon Brezhnev's own war record, and upon the battle of Novorossiisk with which he had been associated. For many, especially for the second generation, the wartime experience, including the party's own losses and eventual triumph, was the ultimate mandate for Communist rule and for the post-war settlement as a whole.

The near-extinction of the Old Bolshevik first generation within the Central Committee was no surprise, given the passage of time and the personnel upheavals under Stalin and under Khrushchev. Only four of these octogenarians survived as CC members to 1981, three of them in an essentially honorary capacity. Marshals Chuikov and Bagramian, long retired, were living reminders of the Second World War. Arvid Pel'she, a Latvian Old Bolshevik who had joined the party in 1915, was a symbol of the October Revolution; he had joined the Central Committee only in 1961 as Latvian first secretary, and then was made head of the Committee of Party Control and a member of the Politburo. The 'last of the Mohicans', re-elected as late as 1986, was Efim Slavskii, a Ukrainian born in 1898 and a party member since 1918, but a 'big, deep-voiced' figure whose 'organizational talents lasted until his later years'.<sup>8</sup> As long-serving minister of medium machine building—overseeing, among other things, the manufacture of nuclear arms—he was a man with serious responsibilities. What was more important was the holding-back of the 'third generation', who only appeared in significant numbers in 1971. Even in 1976 they made up no more than a third of Central Committee membership, excluding token members involved in production. As late as 1981, moreover, in a Central Committee of 470 there was room for only five members of the fourth generation, all of them token representatives: Gennadii Bashtaniuk (a metal-worker), Mariia Golubeva (a milkmaid), Valentina Golubeva (a textile-worker), Leonid Kazakov (a foreman building-worker), and Kholbuvi Rustamova (from an Uzbek state farm).

The Brezhnev elite was overwhelmingly male, although the number of female members, many of them token workers or collective farmers, had been increasing: from thirteen in 1966 to nineteen in 1981 (including the first woman cosmonaut, Valentina Tereshkova), or 4 per cent of the total. But this was well short of their share of party membership (26.5 per cent in the same year<sup>9</sup>); and there were no women at all in the party leadership, nor had there been since Ekaterina Furtseva stood down from the Politburo in 1961. In other respects the characteristics of the Brezhnev elite, dominated as it was by the second generation, were similar to

<sup>8</sup> E. K. Ligachev, *Predosterezhenie* (Moscow: Pravda Interneshnl, 1998), 250.

<sup>9</sup> *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 21 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1981), 491.

those of the late Stalinist and Khrushchev elite. Above all, these people were the products of the same peasant milieu, with the same kind of technical education. The mandate reports that were presented to successive party congresses during this Brezhnev period made it clear that an increasing level of educational attainment was a much more general characteristic of the party's leading institutions. In 1966 79 per cent of congress delegates were recorded as having attained higher, incomplete higher, or secondary qualification; by 1981 the proportion had risen to 94 per cent.<sup>10</sup>

The Brezhnev elite was also an elite of officials, although again there was a slow increase in the number of those actually involved in production: from ten in 1966 to twenty-five in 1981 (events in Poland were already showing the dangers that might arise for a regime of this kind if it lost contact with the social group it claimed to represent). In other respects the composition of the Central Committee was remarkably stable over time, reflecting the formation of an increasingly close association between occupational rank and membership of the party's highest elected body: in other words, this was the consolidation of the job-slot system. Discounting the small numbers of token workers and peasants, the largest single group throughout the Brezhnev years was party officials from the regional or republican level (about a third of the total); they were followed by government ministers and other state officials (approaching a quarter), and then by representatives of the regional state apparatus, central party officials, and the military (all of them about 10 per cent; see Table 5.2). Government ministers were more numerous throughout than the party's central office-holders; regional state officials, by contrast, were fewer than local party representatives and a steadily diminishing proportion of the total.

The degree of continuity in the Brezhnev Central Committee was even more striking at the level of individual positions. The Central Committee that was elected at each of Brezhnev's four congresses included a range of ministers, all at full membership level: the prime minister himself, the head of Gosplan, and the KGB chairman as well as the ministers of shipbuilding and finance, foreign affairs and aviation, defence and the defence industry, agriculture and foreign trade, culture and the electronics industry, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, and general and medium machine building (which was Slavskii's ministry). All the ambassadors to other Warsaw Treaty states were full members throughout the period; so too were the Soviet ambassadors to India and Yugoslavia, but changing priorities in foreign policy were apparent in the inclusion, at later congresses, of the ambassadors to France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and Japan. The ambassador to the

<sup>10</sup> *XXIII s"ezd*, i. 284; *XXVI s"ezd*, i. 220. A significant indicator of the Brezhnevite stability of cadres was the fact that the same official made the mandate report at all four congresses, Ivan Kapitonov, who served as Central Committee secretary for 20 years. The congress figures on education are useful evidence, but need to be treated with caution; they reflect an increasing mass of delegates—as many as 5,002 in 1981—more than the elite at Central Committee level.

**Table 5.3.** Generational breakdown of CC members, 1961–1986

	1961 CC	1966 CC	1971 CC	1976 CC	1981 CC	1986 CC
First generation	28	23	10	4	4	1
Second generation	285	299	281	267	219	81
Third generation	17	38	105	155	242	379
Fourth generation	0	0	0	0	5	16
TOTAL	330	360	396	426	470	477

*Note:* First generation born before 1900, second generation born 1901–20, third generation born 1921–40, fourth generation born after 1941.

United States, Anatolii Dobrynin, moved from candidate to full membership in 1971; the ambassador to Mongolia moved in the other direction five years later. The Cuban, Chinese, and Algerian ambassadors enjoyed full membership in three of the four Central Committees that were elected during the period; the North Korean and Vietnamese were included at the last two congresses, but at candidate or non-voting level.<sup>11</sup>

The core of an increasingly institutionalised assembly, throughout the period, were the regional first secretaries. Some thirty-nine of them were elected to full membership at every congress in the Brezhnev period: they included the first secretaries of Moscow and Leningrad and their respective regions as well as of major industrial centres such as Cheliabinsk, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Gor’kii, Kemerovo, Khar’kov, Kuibyshev, Novosibirsk, Rostov on Don, Saratov, Sverdlovsk, Ul’ianovsk, and Volgograd. Agricultural regions were represented by Altai and Stavropol’, and national minorities by the Bashkir, Dagestan, and Tatar first secretaries. A further thirty-five regions had either candidate or full membership throughout the period, including the Amur, Belgorod, Karelia, Kursk, L’vov, Orel, Penza, Ural, and Vologda regions, all with full membership in three of the four Central Committees that were elected during the Brezhnev years. And there were particular institutions, or even factories, that had all but guaranteed membership throughout these years, like the Magnitogorsk metallurgical combine, the Likhachev auto works in Moscow, Uralmash in Sverdlovsk, and the Baltic shipyard in Leningrad. The writer Mikhail Sholokhov, a full member from 1961 until his death in 1984, was an ‘institution’ of a rather different kind.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The Soviet ambassador to Romania was represented in every Central Committee except that elected in 1971, when the previous incumbent had just been elected ambassador to Chile and was represented in that capacity.

<sup>12</sup> A substantial literature has sought to address the question of regularities in Central Committee membership. Peter Frank’s study, ‘Constructing a Classified Ranking of CPSU Provincial Committees’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 4: 2 (Apr. 1974), 217–30, is limited to obkoms in the Russian Republic in 1966. An extended commentary is presented in Mary McAuley, ‘The Hunting of the Hierarchy: RSFSR Obkom First Secretaries and the Central Committee’, *Soviet Studies*, 26: 4 (Oct. 1974),

**Table 5.4.** Nationality of CC members, 1961–1986

	1961		1966		1971		1976		1981		1986	
	(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)		(%)	
Russian	185	56	209	58	238	60	273	64	328	70	341	71
Ukrainian	55	17	58	16	60	15	66	15	63	13	56	12
Belorussian	10	3	11	3	13	3	14	3	13	3	21	4
Caucasus	11	3	13	4	13	3	13	3	14	3	12	3
Central Asia	17	5	16	4	22	6	20	5	23	5	23	5
Baltic	10	3	11	3	11	3	10	2	10	2	7	1
Other	10	3	12	3	14	4	15	4	19	4	17	4
Unknown	32	10	30	8	25	6	15	4	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	330	100	360	100	396	100	426	100	470	100	477	100

Notes: 'Other' includes up to a dozen groups, from Moldavians to Yakuts, with one or two representatives from each; Germans, Jews, and Poles are in this group. Based on birthplace, name, or place of work nearly all the 'unknown' category in 1961–76 must be Slav, and most are Russian; this tends to be confirmed by the (complete) 1980 and 1986 figures, where the 'Russian' row is comparable to the sum of the Russian and 'unknown' rows in 1961–76.

There was a general stability, equally, in terms of national representation, although there was a tendency for the Slavic nations—Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians—to increase their share in spite of the fact that their proportion of the total population was steadily declining (see Table 5.4). Russians had always enjoyed a higher level of representation than their share of population would have warranted, more even than their share of party membership (about 60 per cent in the late 1970s). The position of the Ukrainians was closer to their share of population, but they were better represented than at any other time during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years (both leaders, perhaps not coincidentally, had been born and spent much of their careers in the republic). Central Asian representation was broadly constant over the period, even though it was well below their share of population and even of party membership. The representation of

473–501; it concludes that a number of variables played a part in determining Central Committee status, including population numbers, party size, economic importance, good economic performance, an incumbent first secretary, current preoccupations, and a wish to stress the 'representative' character of the Central Committee, as well as individual Politburo agreements (pp. 497–8). The job-slot system is explored in Robert V. Daniels, 'Office Holding and Elite Status: The Central Committee of the CPSU', in Paul Cocks *et al.* (eds.), *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 77–95. And there are several analyses of particular Central Committees during this period, among them Michael P. Gehlen and Michael McBride, 'The Soviet Central Committee: An Elite Analysis', *American Political Science Review*, 62: 4 (Dec. 1968), 1,232–41 (which is based on an analysis of 184 of 195 full and 125 of 165 candidate members of the 1966 Central Committee), and Robert H. Donaldson, 'The 1971 Soviet Central Committee: An Assessment of the New Elite', *World Politics*, 24: 3 (Apr. 1972), 382–409.



other groups, including the Caucasian and Baltic nationalities, declined roughly in parallel to their dwindling share of population. Several of the minorities that lacked their own union republic, including the Buriats, Chuvash, Yakuts, Kabardinians, Kalmyks, Karelians, Mari, North Ossetians, and Udmurts, were represented throughout the period at either candidate or full membership level; the first secretary of the Jewish autonomous region became a candidate in 1981, although Jewish representation in the Central Committee as a whole had been steadily declining.

Nationality was an important dimension: but at least as important was birthplace (with the regional associations to which it gave rise), and type of birthplace (for instance, urban or rural). Those born in the Russian republic were the largest group throughout the Brezhnev years, as the nationality evidence would have suggested, and natives of the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics were also well represented. The increase in the proportion of the Central Committee membership born in Siberia is a notable trend (up to 10 per cent by 1986), a reflection of the relative increase in population numbers in this part of the Russian republic but also—it is reasonable to conclude—a sign of the emergence of a strong, well-organized, and self-recruiting regional interest with well-placed patrons within the leadership itself. Those who were born in the Baltic and Central Asian republics, by contrast, were under-represented, together with those who had their origin in the Caucasian republics and the north Caucasian regions of the Russian republic. In terms of type of birthplace, there was again an overall stability: surprisingly perhaps, those who were of village origin continued to provide more than half of the membership throughout the 1970s, and even increased their share in 1986; there was also a slight increase in the relative proportion of Central Committee members who had been born in small rather than larger towns and cities.<sup>13</sup>

## Brezhnev's People

The Central Committee, as we have seen, was increasingly composed of distinct and continuing 'constituencies': members of the central party apparatus, ministers, republican leaders, diplomats, generals, and some token workers and peasants. A key group among them, and in late Soviet politics more generally, were the regional party first secretaries: the 'prefects' who headed the party apparatus in the regions, territories, and autonomous republics. Mikhail Vsevolozhskii represented a region of particular importance throughout the Brezhnev years, based around the iron and steel city of Zaporozh'e in the Ukraine; he was a Central

<sup>13</sup> A fuller discussion is presented in Evan Mawdsley, 'Portrait of a Changing Elite: CPSU Central Committee Full Members, 1939–1990', in Stephen White (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 191–206. Some calculations of the age, nationality, and educational composition of the Central Committee in 1966 and 1981 are presented in *Radio Svo-boda issledovatel'skii biulleten'*, no. 63 (1981), 5–6.

Committee member himself for twenty years from 1966 onwards. Born on 7 November 1917, the very day on which the Bolsheviks seized power from the Provisional Government, Vsevolozhskii was of village origin, from the Ekaterinoslav—or as it later became, Dnepropetrovsk—region.<sup>14</sup> His father was a Russian who had worked at the riverside, building bridges across the Dnieper; his mother, ‘a beauty’, had come from the Kursk region with her family. Vsevolozhskii himself worked on his days off constructing the Dnieper hydroelectricity station that was one of the key sites of the 1st Five Year Plan; in turn it provided the power for the metalworking factories for which the town would later become famous. A member of our second generation, he was a few years younger than most of the cohort discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, and too young to reach a responsible post before the war. Leaving school at 15, he went to a technical college and then to an aviation institute in Rybinsk, on the upper Volga north of Moscow, and it was here, at the start of the war, that he met his wife. All the students were sent out to work at the end of their fourth year of study, Vsevolozhskii to Factory No. 26, a huge enterprise on the outskirts of town that produced engines for Iakovlev fighter aircraft; it was the start of Vsevolozhskii’s long involvement with the defence industries. He finally completed his education in 1965, on a part-time basis, at Dnepropetrovsk metallurgical institute.

With the start of the war Rybinsk began to be bombed, and Vsevolozhskii was evacuated with his family; his daughter was less than two weeks old. It was a difficult journey, and about twenty children died on the way. But in the end they reached the Bashkir capital Ufa, where the factory itself was relocated. The director, Vasilii Balandin, a deputy minister of the aircraft industry, had come under suspicion because of a couple of business trips to Germany and had been imprisoned on Beria’s instructions, but then released after representations had been made on his behalf. The factory was a crucial element in the war economy; Stalin himself phoned ‘almost daily’ to check on performance, and they were eventually able to raise their output to fifty engines a day. Vsevolozhskii had been working on the shop floor, but in 1943 he was transferred to Komsomol duties. It was his liking for jazz, apparently, that led him to be ‘noticed’; he had begun to play the clarinet in school, in the late 1930s progressing to the saxophone. The official responsible died suddenly, and Vsevolozhskii was told: ‘Go and head the Komsomol’; his job, in practice, was to organize various forms of entertainment so that young people could be persuaded to remain and not go off to the front. He joined the CPSU in 1944 and worked later as a Komsomol official in Zaporozh’e and the Crimea until 1949. Vsevolozhskii attended the last party congress at which Stalin was present, in 1952, and then became a member of the Ukrainian party apparatus, completing a course at the Higher Party School in the republic and improving his Ukrainian.

<sup>14</sup> M. N. Vsevolozhskii interview, August 1993, Soviet Elite Project (SEP).



5.1 Mikhail Vsevolozhskii (from  
*Deputaty Verkhovnogo Soveta*,  
1966)

Vsevolozhskii spent the rest of his life in party work: as second and first secretary in a district of Zaporozh'e for the first four years after the war, and then for ten years or more as a full-time official in the regional party apparatus, rising to the position of second secretary. It was in 1966, in the early years of Brezhnev's general secretaryship, that Vsevolozhskii reached national party prominence: he became first secretary of the Zaporozh'e regional organisation, was elected to the Supreme Soviet, and joined the Central Committee as a candidate, moving up to full membership ten years later. Vsevolozhskii began to accumulate further signs of political favour during the Brezhnev years: in 1974 he became a Hero of Socialist Labour and received an Order of Lenin and a Hammer-and-Sickle Gold Medal after a record harvest had been gathered in the region; and in 1977, on his sixtieth birthday, there was a second Order of Lenin.<sup>15</sup> When Brezhnev visited his native Dneprodzerzhinsk in 1979, it was Vsevolozhskii who showed him round.<sup>16</sup>

Vsevolozhskii's particular contribution was a campaign to reduce the burden of physical labour in industry, with the slogan 'Manual work—onto the shoulders of machines'. The campaign was approved personally by the general secretary; it

<sup>15</sup> *Pravda*, 31 Dec. 1974, p. 1, and 7 Nov. 1977, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 Sept. 1979, p. 1.

was praised at the 25th Party Congress in 1976, and endorsed by a Central Committee resolution in 1979.<sup>17</sup> But his star began to fall in the mid-1980s, under a less indulgent leadership. Zaporozh'e was one of the regions that was singled out for its inflation of results by a plenary meeting of the Ukrainian Central Committee in March 1985; there had been a fall in milk production, and Vsevolozhskii was one of those required to 'provide explanations as to what they were doing to overcome lags as quickly as possible'.<sup>18</sup> The following November Vsevolozhskii's resignation as first secretary was announced, 'in connection with his retirement on a pension' (his successor, itself a sign of the changing times, was only 50).<sup>19</sup> Although not the worst example of 'stagnation', it was in a way appropriate that the career of a classic Brezhnevite obkom first secretary—nineteen years in the same post—should come to an end as that era itself was displaced by *perestroika*.

Ziia Nuriev was representative of another constituency in the Central Committee in the Brezhnev years: a Bashkir and chairman of the government of his republic, he went on to become minister of procurements and a deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers. A villager like Vsevolozhskii, he was one of eight children of a 'hard-working peasant'.<sup>20</sup> In material terms it was an average or even prosperous household: there were horses, several cattle, and sheep. But Nuriev's father had died in 1918 when he was just 3 years old and their mother was not in a position to maintain all the family at school. In 1921, a 'hungry year', they fell apart; only Nuriev, in the end, was able to go to the local town and study, boarding with his relatives. After completing school he went on to a teacher-training college in Ufa, and then became a rural schoolmaster. Soon afterwards, just 21 years old, he was put in charge of education for a whole district; later, leaving his family behind, he was conscripted into the army, where he worked as a political officer and (in 1939) joined the Communist Party. One of the younger members of our second generation, he had still not attained a senior post by 1941.

Nuriev did not see active service during the war but moved upwards through a series of party positions, becoming a district first secretary and then, at the end of the war, head of the agricultural department in the Bashkir party headquarters. In 1952 he became a member of the Bashkir party secretariat, in 1954 second secretary, and then in 1957 first secretary of the regional party organization. As this rank befitted, he became a full member of the Central Committee at the following

<sup>17</sup> See M. N. Vsevolozhskii, *Na osnove kompleksnoi programmy. Iz opyta Zaporozhskoi oblastnoi partiinoi organizatsii po sokrascheniiu ruchnogo truda* (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury Ukrainy, 1980), 5, 16 (Brezhnev's approval). The Central Committee resolution, 'O dal'neisem sovershenstvovanii khoziaistvennogo mekhanizma i zadachakh partiinykh i gosudarstvennykh organov', is in *Partiinaia zhizn'*, 15 (1979), 3–4. As Vsevolozhskii noted, Brezhnev had himself been a Zaporozh'e first secretary (*Po vysokim normam* (Dnepropetrovsk: Promin', 1982), 4).

<sup>18</sup> *Pravda*, 26 Mar. 1985, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1985, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Z. N. Nuriev interview, November 1992, SEP.

congress, in 1961; he also furthered his education by completing a part-time higher degree at the Higher Party School in Moscow with a thesis on the grain economy of Bashkiria.<sup>21</sup> In 1969 he moved to the capital and—a more significant departure—from the party apparatus to government service, becoming minister of procurements for the USSR as a whole, and then deputy premier.<sup>22</sup> In all of this, so far as Nuriev was concerned, there had been no element of patronage: ‘I never felt a helping hand behind me at any time.’ It was rather a matter of how people related to their work, what their family life was like, whether or not they were drunks, and what sort of results they were able to achieve. His own ministerial appointment was equally unexpected. Returning from a trip beyond the Urals, he was having a bath well after midnight when a phone-call came from Mikhail Suslov. The day before, Suslov told him, he had been appointed minister of procurements. What, Nuriev responded, all of this without his knowledge? But he was not ‘someone off the street’, Suslov explained, rather, a member of the Supreme Soviet Presidium and a long-serving first secretary. Nuriev protested that his wife was unwilling to move. ‘All wives are like that,’ retorted the austere Central Committee secretary.

It was a similar story when Nuriev, in 1973, was travelling home in his official car. Brezhnev telephoned from the Kremlin to inform him that he had been appointed a deputy prime minister and should present himself to Kosygin the following day. His own opinion, once again, had not been solicited, and he had no particular wish to move, as he was just coming to terms with his ministerial responsibilities. But for Brezhnev, when they met, it was enough that his colleagues had noticed Nuriev’s ‘positive results’. As deputy premier, Nuriev had overall responsibility for the food industry and agriculture; his responsibilities later extended to environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources, on which he reported to the Supreme Soviet in 1985 a few months before his retirement, and he led Soviet delegations to other countries.<sup>23</sup> Nuriev, like Vsevolozhskii, collected a series of public honours: an Order of Lenin on his

<sup>21</sup> See Ziia Nuriev, *Zernovoe khoziaistvo Bashkirii. (Istoriia, ekonomika i perspektivy razvitiia)* (avtoreferat kandidatskoi dissertatsii, Moscow: Akademiia obshchestvennykh nauk pri TsK KPSS, 1966).

<sup>22</sup> *Pravda*, 27 June 1969, p. 6 (chairman of the state procurements committee; later minister of procurements: *Izvestiia*, 19 Sept. 1969, p. 3); *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR*, 15 (1973), item 196, 3 Apr. 1973 (deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers; the appointment was approved in *ibid.*, no. 30, item 400).

<sup>23</sup> *Pravda*, 3 July 1985, p. 3; Nuriev also discussed the environmental issue in an article, ‘V interesakh nyneshnego i budushchikh pokolenii’, in *Kommunist*, 15 (1985), 80–9. He led a delegation to Nepal (*Izvestiia*, 12 Dec. 1967, p. 3) and later to Mongolia (*Pravda*, 5 Oct. 1984, p. 4); his earliest reported travels abroad were to Sweden in 1956 and the GDR and Sierra Leone in 1965 (Alexander Rahr (comp.), *A Biographic Directory of 100 Leading Soviet Officials* (Munich: Radio Liberty, 1984), 153). Nuriev’s retirement was reported in *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR*, 45 (1985), item 864, 6 Nov. 1985.



5.2 Zia Nuriev, pictured in 1970 (Novosti)

fiftieth birthday, another on his sixtieth, and yet another on his seventieth;<sup>24</sup> he addressed the Party Congress in 1966, spoke frequently to the Central Committee, and briefed the Politburo on agricultural matters.<sup>25</sup> But unlike Vsevolozhskii, there was no challenge to his professional competence and he was able to retire with his reputation intact.

Nuriev had attended the 19th Party Congress in 1952 and heard Stalin give his closing address. But there were much closer relations with Khrushchev, who in 1964 had visited Bashkiria and with whom Nuriev was often in direct contact.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 21 Mar. 1965, p. 4; 21 Mar. 1975, p. 1; and 21 Mar. 1985, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> For his reports to the Politburo see e. g. *Pravda*, 1 Jan. 1983, p. 1, *Spravocbnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 24, part 1 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1984), 84, 85, 91, 105, and vyp. 25 (1985), pp. 74–5.

Energetic and thoroughly committed to the revival of the economy, Khrushchev none the less (in Nuriev's view) 'lacked culture'; he was prepared, for instance, to criticize Nuriev at a Central Committee plenum for his limited knowledge of the varieties of maize, though Nuriev replied that he was well acquainted with wheat, rye, barley, and everything else that was cultivated in his own republic. The establishment of regional economic councils (*sovnarkhozy*), in Nuriev's view, had hardly been a case of 'adventurism' so far as Bashkiria was concerned: industrial output had doubled in these seven years. But the separation of party committees into industrial and agricultural sections had (as for Vsevolozhskii) been a pointless exercise; and with his attention taken up with the *sovnarkhozy*, Khrushchev had become less interested in agricultural matters.

Brezhnev, by contrast, 'worked very actively' in matters of this kind, at least until his illness. And although there had been excesses in the use of chemicals and land reform during his general secretaryship, yields had risen considerably. It was in these years that the USSR had become the world's biggest milk producer, and had overtaken America in the output of grain and meat. Brezhnev had telephoned him 'at least daily' about agricultural matters and the food supply in particular, even during the summer when he was on holiday in the Crimea; 'he always kept in contact with the obkoms'. And in his responses to the proposals that Nuriev sent him Brezhnev was always ready to support the agricultural sector. Before each Five Year Plan was put to the Supreme Soviet, Brezhnev would study the agricultural provisions separately and always made the necessary resources available. He showed genuine concern about questions of this kind, 'even more than Khrushchev'; and it had been Brezhnev who had supported Nuriev's proposal to turn a rather ineffectual Committee on State Procurements into a fully fledged ministry in 1969, with a bigger staff and more specific responsibilities. But later, over the five years or so of Brezhnev's illness, and when his speeches at party plenums were already an embarrassment, they had continued to support him. 'The Brezhnev we used to know had become completely different,' Nuriev concluded; the pity was that he had not resigned earlier, when he might have left 'not a bad impression'.

Petr Gorchakov was representative of a smaller but no less important subgroup of Central Committee members, those from the armed forces (who typically accounted for about 8 per cent in post-war Central Committees). Gorchakov himself rose to become head of the political administration of the strategic rocket forces from 1970 up to 1984, and a candidate member of the Central Committee from 1971 to 1986. Born in a village, he was the son of a dynasty of stonemasons and one of a family of nine who lived in the Lipetsk region. His birth month, like that of Vsevolozhskii, was November 1917. His mother, his elder sister, and two brothers died during the Civil War, leaving his father to bring up a daughter and three sons. His father, a mason who had been employed in a sugar factory, had taken part in the Russo-Japanese War at the start of the century and had been seri-

ously wounded. He was no friend of tsardom; Gorchakov, only 7 at the time, remembered when his father had told him that Lenin had died, in 1924—‘it affected him deeply’. The owners of the sugar factory had left a house—‘you could call it a palace’—in which a school was organized; there was also a library, and on another floor a cinema. Gorchakov remembered being dressed in red breeches and a blue necktie, and announcing that he was ‘10 years old and a contemporary of the October Revolution’. The party secretary in the region at this time was Iosif Vareikis, the ‘Leninist-Stalinist’ we considered in Chapter 2 and who was himself a Central Committee member from 1924 to 1937, when he became a victim of the Purges. How hard he worked! When a foundry was being built at the start of the 1930s, the local Komsomol had been mobilized to dig ditches for the concrete foundations. Vareikis visited the site at night—not as party leaders did later, with prior notice and a lot of publicity, but without warning; and he would tell the factory director the following morning about the ‘outrages’ that were taking place under his auspices. Gorchakov worked later as a driver on a collective farm and was elected secretary of his local Komsomol committee in 1937. These, as Gorchakov recalled them, were ‘difficult’ years. The Komsomol committee, for instance, had received a coded telegram instructing them to report how many ‘enemies of the people’ they had unmasked and what they were doing to ‘eliminate hostile elements’. They satisfied the central authorities, in the end, by reporting that no enemies of the people had been identified but that all kinds of labour records had been broken.

Gorchakov had an incomplete secondary education and then enrolled in the party school at Voronezh. He went on to work in the local Komsomol, as a propagandist and organizer of political study; at the same time he began to read literature, including Pushkin, Gogol, and Dostoevskii ‘from start to finish’. In 1938 he was conscripted into the army, and later remembered looking despairingly at the timetable: up at 6, breakfast, duties of all kinds, sleep. Could he go to bed an hour or so later, so as to complete his education, and still get up with the others in the morning? But he found the time, took his final school examinations, and within a couple of months had been promoted to the post of political officer. He joined the CPSU in May 1939, the same year as Nuriev. It wasn’t easy to complete the necessary formalities as there had to be five sponsors, each of whom had to have been a party member for at least ten years. One, Gorchakov recalled, was the chairman of the collective farm on which he worked, another had to come from a county office 20 miles away, and a third was the director of a local factory; all had to be present when the vote on his admission was taken, very different from the casual approach of later years. Gorchakov soon became party secretary of a battalion stationed at Chita, in the Far East; then the party committee in Voronezh called him back and made him head of information in his native village. And then suddenly the war began: he heard the news while with his sister on a shopping expedition, and then heard it confirmed on the radio.



Gorchakov found himself in charge of recruitment, but demanded a posting at the front.<sup>26</sup> He was wounded and hospitalized, but returned to work in a regimental party committee and then as political commissar of a guards regiment. In the end Gorchakov spent the whole war in the infantry. To begin with, he recalled, they retreated without particular resentment: the German forces were simply more numerous. But when they started to burn down the houses around Moscow and systematically slaughter cattle and even chickens all the Russian soldiers, including Gorchakov himself, developed a bitter hatred of the invading army. He was wounded three times in the course of the war, and left with five pieces of shrapnel embedded in various parts of his body from an exploding mine. It was at this time that he was made a Hero of the Soviet Union for the bravery of his leadership in the crossing of the Dnieper in 1943;<sup>27</sup> later, he took part in the Victory Parade in Red Square as the war in Europe came to an end, chosen by Aleksei Epishev, a member of the high command of the 38th Army who later became head of the political administration of the armed forces as a whole, and marching side by side with Leonid Brezhnev, who had been his superior as head of the political administration of the Fourth Ukrainian Front.<sup>28</sup>

The party authorities were reluctant to allow a man of Gorchakov's standing and experience to leave the army (his association with Epishev and Brezhnev, presumably, was also helpful), and after further study at the Lenin Military Academy he went on to become a political commissar in Belorussia and Ukraine, and then in Estonia. Relations with local people in Estonia were a source of some difficulty, and Russians were always the last to be served in local shops: his wife 'more than once returned in tears'. Gorchakov himself had a disagreement with the Estonian party leadership, who denounced him to the Central Committee; he was transferred to the Far East, and after a series of further postings ended up as a member of the command of the Soviet strategic rocket force, where he remained until his retirement. The 1970s were the years in which the Soviet nuclear arsenal developed most rapidly, and in which a new generation of strategic missiles was brought forward; but Gorchakov's own responsibility was political education among the troops, and his published writings were most often related to his wartime experiences.<sup>29</sup> He was a deputy to four successive convocations of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and held two Orders of Lenin as well as his other distinctions.

<sup>26</sup> P. A. Gorchakov interview, February 1993, SEP. Gorchakov wrote about this period in his *Vremia trevog i pobed*, 2nd edn. (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1981), 3–5.

<sup>27</sup> I. N. Shkadov et al. (eds.), *Geroi Sovetskogo Soiuza. Kratkii biograficheskii slovar'*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1987), i. 358–9. See also A. Erokhin, *Geroi Dnepra* (Voronezh: Voronezhskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1945).

<sup>28</sup> Gorchakov, *Vremia*, 268–70. Gorchakov's political connections are identified in Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 313–14.

<sup>29</sup> Gorchakov wrote about his political-educational work in *Liudi, rakety, boegotovnost'*. *Iz opyta partino-politicheskoi raboty v podrazdeleniakh Raketnykh voisk strategicheskogo naznachenii* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1985). His memoir writings included *Kommunist* (Vilnius), 5 (1970), 40–7, and *Oktiabr'*, 5 (1975), 156–66.



**5.3** Petr Gorchakov, pictured in 1974 on his election as a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)

Gorchakov joined the Central Committee in 1971, as a candidate member; his first congress was rather earlier, in 1961, when he heard Khrushchev's address, but it was not until the congress ten years later, when he represented the more numerous armed forces stationed around the town of Vladimir, that he reached leading levels. He represented the Kaluga party organization at subsequent congresses, and twice again was elected to the Central Committee. Gorchakov, to begin with, attached no particular importance to the accession of Khrushchev, but it was he who, in Gorchakov's view, had initiated the policies that eventually led to the collapse of the USSR itself. First there had been a decision to cut the size of the peasants' private plot and the number of livestock they could keep; then there had been a directive to reduce the number of villages and create agrotowns, and to eliminate minor forms of industry. Khrushchev, in Gorchakov's view, was no more impressive in personal encounters—a judgement that had clearly not been tempered by the party leader's enthusiastic commitment to the armed forces, and to strategic weapons in particular. Brezhnev, by contrast, was for Gorchakov a leader of sound judgement for about ten years, until he too began to be lauded without measure; and for the last four years of his leadership he simply signed documents without looking at them, his two requests to stand down disregarded.

As with ministries and regional first secretaries, there was a close and increasingly automatic association between rank and Central Committee membership throughout the Brezhnev period. The head of the Main Political Administration of the armed forces, which was a part of the party's own central apparatus, was elected a full member at each of the congresses during the period. So was the chief of the General Staff, and the commander-in-chief of the strategic missile forces. The navy's commander-in-chief, Admiral Gorshkov, had been a full member since 1961. The commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact forces was a candidate and then, from 1971, a full member, and several of the military districts were normally represented, including Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev, although they were more likely to be candidates than full members. Political officers were less frequently included, although the head of political administration in the Moscow military district was a candidate member of the Central Committee throughout the Brezhnev years, and Gorchakov's own predecessor had been elected a candidate in 1966. The periods in which military representation on the Central Committee had been at its highest had, in the past, been those in which the political influence of the armed forces was at its lowest;<sup>30</sup> the Brezhnev years, by contrast, were ones in which the political representation of the armed forces was relatively modest but in which they were able to make unprecedented claims on the allocation of public resources.

Regarding case studies, two final points can be made, both of which relate to the important feature of continuity. First of all, other Central Committee figures, whom we have already considered as case studies in Chapters 3 and 4, held senior posts into the era of 'stability of cadres' under Brezhnev. These leaders included Baibakov, Patolichev, Novikov, and Zhurin. And second, the three men discussed in this chapter, Nuriev, Vsevolozhskii, and Gorchakov, had much in common with those who had been elected earlier to the Central Committee. Although they initially joined the Central Committee in the late Khrushchev period (Nuriev) or the Brezhnev years (Vsevolozhskii and Gorchakov), they too were from the second generation of the Soviet elite. This continuity, as we have seen, was a significant characteristic of the Soviet leadership in these years.

## The Central Committee under 'Developed Socialism'

If Khrushchev's Central Committee plenums were a participatory and open institution that made some claim to constitute a 'parliament of the party', Brezhnev's were fewer, less extended, and less significant as a locus of the political elite in its decision-making capacity. There was, indeed, an element of stage management about them. As coal minister Boris Bratchenko recalled, there was a well-established procedure that governed where members took their seats: the

<sup>30</sup> Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 331.

representatives of energy, industrial, and other heavyweight ministries towards the front, the representatives of cultural, educational, and other smaller spenders towards the rear.<sup>31</sup> All the plenums he attended, Bratchenko recalled, had a somewhat artificial character: 'all those who spoke were agreed in advance and prepared for their speech in advance.' He himself addressed a party congress twice, the Central Committee just once. The relevant department of the party headquarters called him up beforehand and asked to see his speech. 'Why?', he asked them, 'do you think I'm going to carry out a counter-revolution?' Everything at the plenums was formal; 'not once' did he recall questions or discussion. In the Council of Ministers, by contrast, there were 'bitter struggles'. Others, such as the director of the USA and Canada Institute Georgii Arbatov, remembered a similar procedure: the Central Committee apparatus would normally be in touch before a plenum took place to discuss a possible contribution, and although speakers at the plenum itself could say whatever they wanted, there would clearly be 'consequences' if the speech was thought to have been injudicious. Several promising careers had been brought to a premature conclusion in this way.<sup>32</sup>

Meetings of the Central Committee during the Brezhnev years were not, in fact, without controversy. There were sometimes verbal objections from the floor, with government ministers and factory managers placed in some difficulty;<sup>33</sup> and there was a more substantial disagreement—the only one Bratchenko could recall—in 1967 when Moscow party secretary Nikolai Egorychev addressed a plenum on foreign affairs. Egorychev had already offended Brezhnev by his public insistence that there should be no reversion to a cult of personality, and by dwelling on shortcomings rather than more positive achievements in economic management (for his earlier career see above, pp. 147–152).<sup>34</sup> Personal relations broke down entirely when Egorychev, speaking to the plenum in June 1967 just after the Israeli victory in the Six Day War, launched a bitter attack on Zionism and other forms of national chauvinism, and called for stronger military support for the Arab countries.<sup>35</sup> He also complained that Moscow was poorly protected, and that it lacked sufficient air defences in particular.<sup>36</sup> A break was called half-an-

<sup>31</sup> B. F. Bratchenko interview, May–June 1992, SEP.

<sup>32</sup> G. A. Arbatov, *Zatiamuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie (1953–1985gg.)*: *Svidetel'stvo sovremennika* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1991), 256.

<sup>33</sup> S. A. Antonov, *Svet ne v okne* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977), 225.

<sup>34</sup> Egorychev was interviewed in 'Napravlen poslom', *Ogonek*, no. 6, 1989, pp. 6–7, 28–30; here, p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 28–9.

<sup>36</sup> Bratchenko interview, SEP. Brezhnev, Viktor Grishin recalled, was responsible for the defence of the capital, and took the criticism personally; Egorychev was 'immediately dismissed' (V. V. Grishin, *Ot Khrushcheva do Gorbacheva. Politicheskie portrety piati Gensekov i A. N. Kosygina* (Moscow: Aspol, 1996), 323). The defence of the city in fact began on the borders of the state itself, recalled another Politburo member and one close to Brezhnev, Dinmukhamed Kunaev; the speech was 'seen by all as unserious and unobjective' (*Prostor*, no. 12, 1991, p. 20).

hour early;<sup>37</sup> Brezhnev, responding after they had reconvened, pointed out that Egorychev was himself a member of the Military Council and that he had not bothered to attend a single one of its meetings. A few days later Egorychev ‘became ambassador in one of the minor countries’ and he was dropped from the Central Committee at the first available opportunity, at the party congress in 1971.<sup>38</sup>

On other occasions it was the general secretary who himself introduced an element of controversy by criticizing the performance of ministers individually, directly, and in their presence. In November 1979 a series of economic ministers were taken to task: among them was railway minister Ivan Pavlovskii, who bore a ‘considerable share of responsibility’ for the failure to observe schedules for the transportation of raw materials.<sup>39</sup> Energy minister Petr Neporozhnyi was told to sort out power-lines in Kazakhstan ‘as a matter of urgency’, and metallurgy minister Kazanets was told to pay more attention to the improvement of quality. Construction minister Nikolai Goldin was warned that the building industry was behind its targets, and engineering minister Sinitsyn was criticized for producing tractors that were unsuited to the tasks they were required to perform. Fertilizer factories were standing idle, the minister was reminded, and chemical plants were working at half capacity, for which minister Konstantin Brekhov was responsible. Ministers Lein and Antonov were blamed for shortcomings in food and milk production, and ministers Tarasov and Struev for the lack of soap, washing powder, and other necessities.<sup>40</sup> A year later, in October 1980, it was the minister of agricultural machinery who was called to account in this way.<sup>41</sup>

In general, Brezhnev told the 25th Congress in 1976, the Central Committee had been engaged in resolving ‘highly important questions of the life of the party and the entire country’. There were important sessions every December, at which the annual plan and budget were considered; apart from this the May 1972 plenum had addressed foreign policy and the Vietnam War, and the April 1973 meeting had considered foreign economic activity.<sup>42</sup> Speaking in 1981, Brezhnev drew particular attention to the discussion of the draft constitution in 1977 (an earlier plenum had approved the text and music of a new national anthem), the July 1978 plenum that had dealt once again with agriculture, and the June 1980 session that had considered foreign policy—or more precisely ‘the struggle for detente in a

<sup>37</sup> *Ogonek*, no. 6, 1989, p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Bratchenko interview, SEP. Egorychev was in fact appointed ambassador the following year, to Denmark. The foreign policy advisor A. M. Aleksandrov-Agentov recalled in his memoirs that another foreign policy issue, the inviting of Richard Nixon to Moscow in the early 1970s during the Vietnam War, had been ‘actively discussed’ at a Central Committee plenum: *Ot Kollontai do Gorbacheva* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1994), 73.

<sup>39</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom: rechi, privetstviia, stat'i*, vol. 8 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1981), 198.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 200, 201, 202, 203, 206, 207.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 472.

<sup>42</sup> *XXV s"ezd*, i. 91.

worsening international situation', a few months after Soviet forces had intervened in Afghanistan.<sup>43</sup> Other plenums considered land reform, social policy, the world communist movement, and forthcoming party congresses and Supreme Soviet sessions; it was a Central Committee plenum that approved the Kosygin economic reforms in September 1965, and an ambitious 'food programme' in May 1982.

Although the full proceedings were not published during these years, communiqués made it clear that there was a well-established procedure. After an initial report, usually by the general secretary, there would be responses from republican leaders, with the Ukrainian first secretary often leading the way. These were followed by contributions from the relevant ministers and regional first secretaries, with an occasional further contribution from the editor of *Pravda*, the head of the TASS news agency, a token worker or peasant, and an academic such as Nikolai Inozemtsev, director of the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations. The plenum itself was preceded by more detailed preparatory work. Several months before the June 1978 plenum that considered agricultural policy, for instance, the Politburo appointed a commission with a membership drawn from the Central Committee itself as well as from the local party leadership, academics, and managers. Its recommendations were considered at several meetings of the Politburo, and then transmitted to the plenum in good time for a more extended discussion. Equally, the first secretaries who visited Moscow for each successive plenum spent much of their time in ministerial offices, advancing the interests of their own regions.<sup>44</sup>

Throughout the Brezhnev period the party rules prescribed that the Central Committee should hold 'no less than one plenary meeting every six months'; the practice soon became established that there should not normally be more than two such meetings a year, with occasional exceptions such as in the years in which there was a party congress and accordingly a need to elect a new Politburo and Secretariat. During the Khrushchev years—from 1954 to 1964—the Central Committee had met for an average of ten days every year; during the Brezhnev years—from 1965 to 1982—the average was no more than three and a half, and declining (see Table 5.5). There was a corresponding fall in the number of speakers that were able to address the Central Committee: more than seventy a year in the later Khrushchev period, the number of contributors to plenums was down by

<sup>43</sup> *XXVIs"ezd*, i. 88.

<sup>44</sup> *Kommunist*, 12 (1979), 34; and (for the work of first secretaries in Moscow) Egor Ligachev, *Zagadka Gorbacheva* (Novosibirsk: Interbuk, 1992), 20–1: there were admittedly some who spent their time 'by no means occupied in business visits', p. 21). Sergei Antonov, elected to the Central Committee in 1966, recalled that there was 'intense activity' before each plenum, especially in preparatory commissions, so that its recommendations were the 'fruit of a great collective labour' (*Svet ne v okne*, 232). Viktor Grishin recalled similarly that he spent a 'lot of time' studying the documentation that was produced in advance of each session, and for the work of various Central Committee commissions (*Ot Khrushcheva do Gorbacheva*, 288).

**Table 5.5.** Levels of Central Committee Activity, 1966–1985

	No. of plenums	Days of meeting	Resolutions adopted at plenums	Other CC resolutions
1966	6	9	5	6
1967	2	3	5	18
1968	4	6	5	14
1969	2	2	3	14
1970	3	4	4	8
1971	3	4	4	9
1972	2	2	3	25
1973	2	4	2	10
1974	2	2	1	22
1975	2	2	4	16
1976	3	4	3	10
1977	3	3	4	11
1978	2	3	2	14
1979	2	2	1	11
1980	2	2	3	13
1981	3	3	3	21
1982	3	3	8	11
1983	2	4	2	14
1984	3	3	9	14
1985	4	4	2	6

Source: derived from *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuzu v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsKspravochnyi tom*, 3rd ed. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990), various pages.

the Brezhnev years to less than fifteen for the meetings for which the speakers were listed.<sup>45</sup> Zilia Nuriev, first secretary of an important region and later (as we have seen) a minister and deputy premier, was able to address the Central Committee just six times in the twenty years that followed the ousting of Khrushchev;<sup>46</sup> Mikhail Vsevolozhskii, first secretary in the industrial region of Zaporozh'e, made not a single reported contribution, nor did Petr Gorchakov, who was one of those who represented the important military constituency.

The number of resolutions and other decisions that were adopted in the name of the Central Committee, by contrast, did increase over the Brezhnev years; but it was an increase that reflected a greater degree of activity by the full-time apparatus, not by the Central Committee and its members. Plenums typically

<sup>45</sup> Calculated on the basis of the reports that appeared in *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 7 ff. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1967 ff.).

<sup>46</sup> According to the published reports, which normally included a list of speakers, Nuriev spoke twice in 1965, once in 1966, twice in 1968, and once again in 1970.

'approved the postulates and conclusions contained in the report of the General Secretary of the CPSU Comrade Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev'; this allowed party and government officials to interpret the resolutions in whatever way they wished by drafting more specific instructions for their own institution.<sup>47</sup> There had been just four or five resolutions (*postanovleniia*), on average, in the late Stalin years from 1946 to 1953, and only three were adopted directly at Central Committee plenums. The Khrushchev years, after 1954, saw an increase to nearly ten resolutions a year, and the Brezhnev years a further rise to more than seventeen, although there was a very slight fall in the number that were adopted at plenary meetings. There were particularly large numbers of decisions in the early 1970s, as the new leadership consolidated its position, and particularly small numbers of resolutions adopted at plenums themselves in the late 1970s, as the leadership moved from consolidation to stagnation. There was an increasing tendency, at the same time, to adopt joint resolutions in the name of the Central Committee itself, the Council of Ministers, and (less frequently) the national Trade Union Council. In May 1982, for instance, a plenum approved six joint party and government decisions to implement the food programme that had been approved at the same meeting.

There were occasional calls during the period for the Central Committee to go further and become an 'active political organ', a body that was 'linked to the masses and sensitive to their moods and wishes', with a much smaller bureaucracy and a commitment to the 'regular renewal' of its own membership. And there were, to begin with, some 'improvements' in its work, with 'better briefings for those taking part'.<sup>48</sup> Some of these changes were already apparent at the March 1965 plenum, addressed by Brezhnev, which considered agricultural reform. There was no exaggerated praise for the first secretary's report—in the words of a republican first secretary, it was simply a 'thorough and objective analysis'<sup>49</sup>—or for Brezhnev personally. And there were criticisms, from the floor, of individual government ministers. Why, asked Ziia Nuriev, speaking as Bashkir first secretary, were there always shortages of harrows and other agricultural equipment? Why, asked another first secretary, were there still breadlines? And why were there milkmaids who worked up to fourteen hours a day, and went for fifteen years without a day off?<sup>50</sup> The plenum took place over three days; there were twenty-nine speakers, each of whom was allowed twenty minutes (fifty asked for the floor); and there were pointed questions from the wider membership as they proceeded. The plenum concluded with a resolution that pointed to the need to avoid

<sup>47</sup> Valentin Pavlov, *Upushchen li sbans? Finansovyi kliuch k rynku* (Moscow: Terra, 1995), 50.

<sup>48</sup> Roi Medvedev, *Kniga o sotsialisticheskoi demokratii* (Amsterdam–Paris: Fond imeni Gertsena/Grasset & Fasquelle, 1972), 146–7, 152, 155, 136–7 (improvements were also reported in the work of the Politburo).

<sup>49</sup> See *Plenum Tsentral'nogo komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz 24–26 marta 1965 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1965), 121.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 98 (Nuriev), 37 (Shelest), 164 (milkmaids).



'administrative' approaches to agricultural management and to achieve a greater measure of popular involvement.<sup>51</sup>

As the new leadership consolidated its position, however, the Central Committee became a steadily less central arena in the decision-making process; so indeed did the Politburo, which in the later stages of Brezhnev's general secretaryship met once a week for no more than forty minutes at a time.<sup>52</sup> The June 1980 Central Committee plenum, shortly after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, was reasonably typical of those of the late Brezhnev era.<sup>53</sup> There were two questions on the agenda: the convening of the 26th Congress, on which Brezhnev spoke briefly, and the Afghan crisis, where US ruling circles (he went on) had 'stopped at nothing, including armed aggression, to prevent the Afghans building a new life in accordance with the ideals of the liberating revolution of April 1978'. A military intervention had been the 'only correct decision' in these circumstances, Brezhnev insisted, and the USSR, he promised, would continue to help the Afghans 'defend the gains of the April revolution'. Foreign minister Gromyko followed with a report on the international situation, which attacked the decision by Western governments to deploy new medium-range missiles in Europe and to establish an armed attack force in the Gulf. Hostility towards the United States in these circumstances would be 'dangerous as well as foolish'; but the US government, for its part, must take account of the legitimate interests of its Soviet counterpart.

Other speakers added their agreement, and dwelt particularly upon the personal contribution of Brezhnev himself. Eduard Shevardnadze, at this time Georgian first secretary, drew particular attention to the general secretary's 'enormous authority' on the world stage. Recently in Brazil, he had discovered once again that there was 'in today's world no more authoritative, consistent statesman than Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev', and none who was more widely respected. Reading his 'fundamental works' and witnessing for himself Brezhnev's 'titanic activity', Shevardnadze was 'filled with pride and joy' that at the head of party and state was a person 'organically combining the broadest erudition, Leninist principle, proletarian resolve, revolutionary audacity, deep humanism [and] rare diplomatic flexibility (*Stormy, prolonged applause*)'. A member of the Ukrainian Politburo promised that the workers of his republic would make a 'worthy contribution' to

<sup>51</sup> See *Plenum Tsentral'nogo komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 24–26 marta 1965 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*. 231 (number who asked for the floor). The resolution that was adopted made substantial changes in the system of agricultural procurement (*ibid.* 235–8). On the plenum see Solomon Schwarz, 'Agriculture: The Curtain is Lifted', *Problems of Communism*, 15: 2 (Mar.–Apr. 1966), 12–20.

<sup>52</sup> See e.g. V. G. Afanas'ev, *4-ia vlast' i 4 Genseka* (Moscow: Kedr, 1994), 38; Aleksandrov-Agentov, *Ot Kollontai*, recalled that meetings lasted up to an hour (p. 273); Gorbachev, ones that lasted for fifteen or twenty minutes (M. S. Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), i. 217).

<sup>53</sup> This account is drawn from the protocol held in the party archives: Tsentr khreneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii (TsKhSD), Moscow, *fond 89, perechen' 14, delo 40*.

the forthcoming party congress; and the Leningrad party leader thanked Brezhnev personally for the 'peaceful sky' they had enjoyed for the past thirty-five years. The editor of the weekly paper *Literaturnaia gazeta* noted the 'very significant fact' that Brezhnev's memoirs had been published in more than twenty-five countries; a steelworker from the Donbass responded in a different way by promising an extra 2,000 tonnes from the furnace in which he worked by the time the next congress convened.

By the summer of 1983, with the accession of Yuri Andropov, the element of personal praise had disappeared. Votes were still unanimous, and there was 'stormy, prolonged applause' when it was proposed that Andropov be nominated as the new chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium or in effect head of state.<sup>54</sup> But a different note was struck with the agreement that two of Brezhnev's associates, interior minister Nikolai Shchelokov and Krasnodar first secretary Sergei Medunov, should be removed from the Central Committee for 'mistakes in their work'.<sup>55</sup> The main speaker was Konstantin Chernenko, not the general secretary; and the subject was culture and ideology, the first time such subjects had been addressed for twenty years. Andropov himself made no more than an occasional intervention after he had opened the proceedings, and then gave a more formal address on the second day; and Mikhail Gorbachev was in the chair. The new general secretary's earlier speeches were simply an 'important contribution' for the first speaker from the floor, Moscow party secretary Viktor Grishin, and Chernenko's report was described as no more than 'instructive', although a few professed to welcome its 'Marxist-Leninist profundity' and there was a special round of applause when Chernenko reminded delegates that it was the general secretary's birthday.<sup>56</sup> The key starting-point was now the plenum of November 1982, the first to be held after the death of Brezhnev; and speaker after speaker expressed his approval for the new policy of waging an 'uncompromising struggle for a high level of organization and discipline, for a strict regime everywhere and in everything in order to raise the effectiveness of production and the quality of work'.<sup>57</sup>

The Central Committee had been marginalized during the Brezhnev years, at least in its collective decision-making capacity; but it was through the Central Committee that major departures in policy had been introduced and discussed, and the increasing predictability of its membership meant that they depended less directly on the general secretary for their advancement. The Central Committee, in this sense, mirrored the regime: ageing, rarely convening in plenary session, but consulting regularly with the interests they represented, and increasingly a collec-

<sup>54</sup> *Plenum Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS 14-15 iiumia 1983 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1983), 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 5.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 44 (Grishin), 45, 98, 132 (birthday).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 105 (A. E. Voss).

tion of the representatives of those interests rather than a body that reflected the choices of the party leader. And this, in turn, made it a body that took its decisions on the basis of a consensus among its members rather than the policy preferences of the general secretary, and one that avoided difficult decisions. It was even suggested that a number of ‘unwritten constitutional restraints’ had developed in the USSR during these years of a kind that were similar to those in countries like the United Kingdom that lacked a written constitution, and that these constraints were apparent in the ability of the Central Committee to prevent the party leadership overriding the interests of major social groups or key institutions.<sup>58</sup> The Central Committee began to recover its centrality during the year and a half that Andropov was party leader; in turn, it provided a framework within which a much more far-reaching democratization could take place under Mikhail Gorbachev.

<sup>58</sup> Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 555.

# 6 | Challenge and Crisis, 1985–1991

The CPSU Central Committee . . . occupies a special place in the party and in society. In the intervals between congresses it is there that all major questions of domestic and foreign policy are decided. It is of great significance to the entire party and to the whole of our society how the Central Committee works, what questions it discusses, what decisions it takes, and how democratic is the atmosphere during its proceedings.

M. S. Gorbachev, 19th Party Conference, 1988

After all the Central Committee—it's a brain.

M. S. Gorbachev, 1989

A wide gap appeared between the party leadership and the mass of ordinary party members. The gap proved unbridgeable, mainly because it suited the party leadership very well. Indeed, they did everything to preserve the gap and that was one of the major causes of the Soviet Communist Party's collapse.

Boris Yeltsin, 1997

If 'stability of cadres' was a key attribute of the Brezhnevite leadership, the assumption after the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985 was that changes should be rapid and far-reaching. The new general secretary had told the Politburo meeting that agreed to nominate him that 'we don't need to change our policies';<sup>1</sup> and speaking to the Central Committee just after his election he pledged himself to continue the policies of his predecessors, which he defined as 'acceleration of socio-economic development and the perfection of all aspects of social life'.<sup>2</sup> But there had been pointed references, in earlier speeches, to *glasnost*, social justice, and self-management, and the agenda of the leadership after 1985 extended to a much more far-reaching series of reforms embracing

<sup>1</sup> Politburo minutes, 11 March 1985, in Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii (TsKhSD), Moscow, *fond* 89, *perechen'* 36, document 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Materialy vneocherednogo Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS 11 marta 1985 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1985), 9.

democratization, a market economy, and a co-operative rather than confrontational relationship with the outside world. The Russian people (it was suggested) had made the only choice that was available to them in 1917; a socialist system had been constructed to express their aspirations; and the task that faced them in the late 1980s was (in the official view) 'more socialism'—or in other words, a return to the democratic and participatory norms of the early post-revolutionary period.

If the system was fundamentally sound, what had gone wrong during the Brezhnev years? It was a central assumption of the Gorbachev administration that it had been 'subjective' factors, above all the quality of political leadership, that had led to the degeneration of Soviet socialism after a 'command-administrative system' had been established in the 1930s and left unchanged throughout the 'stagnation' of the 1970s. For years, Gorbachev told the CPSU Congress in 1986, party and government leaders had lagged behind the needs of the times, not only for objective reasons but because of factors 'above all of a subjective character'.<sup>3</sup> Speaking to the Russian party congress in 1990 he acknowledged that the mechanical replacement of leading officials was 'not a panacea'; but people mattered more than structures, and the right appointments were of 'decisive' significance.<sup>4</sup> The 'root cause' of their difficulties, Gorbachev told the Central Committee later in the year, was the failure to respond adequately to the challenge of the times, or the 'inertia of old thinking'.<sup>5</sup> And in a speech in November 1990 he declared that the 'most important revolution' was the 'revolution in minds, in our heads, in us ourselves'.<sup>6</sup> Each previous leadership had consolidated its position by promoting its supporters and marginalizing its opponents; the Gorbachev leadership added a specific commitment to a new type of party and to a different, younger, and more reform-minded party elite.

The reconstruction of the leadership proceeded most rapidly in the Politburo and Secretariat. There were several changes in April 1985, at Gorbachev's first Central Committee plenum; by March 1986, after the 27th Party Congress, half of the members of the Politburo and Secretariat were Gorbachev appointees. After his second congress, in 1990, no fewer than 83 per cent of the joint membership were entirely new to national party office.<sup>7</sup> All the party leaders in the republics had been replaced, some of them more than once, by the same date; the Russian party leadership was also new, as there had been no party organization with responsibility for the largest of the members of the union. Lower down the party apparatus, two-thirds of the full-time officials at regional, territorial, and republican level and 70 per cent of those at district and city level had been replaced

<sup>3</sup> M. S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, 7 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987–90), iii, 181–3.

<sup>4</sup> *Pravda*, 26 June 1990, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 Oct. 1990, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 Nov. 1990, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 5.

by 1988.<sup>8</sup> By 1990 not a single minister at the time of Gorbachev's accession was still in office, only two of the ambassadors, and in the economy, fewer than a third of the country's industrial managers and farm directors.<sup>9</sup> What kind of people were leaving the party elite, in these circumstances of rapid change, and what kind of people were joining it? What were their social worlds and their political attitudes? And what was their role, when they met in plenary session, in a party that remained the dominant force in Soviet political life up to and even after the end of its constitutionally guaranteed 'leading role' in 1990?

## A Changing Elite

The elite of the Gorbachev period, members of the Central Committee elected in 1986 and 1990, comprised no fewer than 831 individuals, ninety-one more than the number in the Brezhnev elite elected in 1966, 1971, 1976, and 1981. The size of the Gorbachev elite was a product both of the unprecedented numbers in the 1986 Central Committee (477) and of the much greater degree of turnover between 1986 and 1990 as compared with that between the Brezhnev congresses (see Table 6.1). Turnover between the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods was also very high, as the emphasis upon renewal might have suggested; of the 831 in the Gorbachev elite, only 259 had been in the 1981 Central Committee. There had been an increasing tendency towards continuity under Brezhnev's general secretaryship; the turnover rate increased at Gorbachev's first party congress in 1986—although it was less than it had been in 1956 and 1961, when Khrushchev was consolidating his position—and it increased still more sharply in 1990, when turnover was even greater than at the time of Stalin's purges. Of the 139 members and candidates elected in 1939, only twenty-four (17 per cent) had been members or candidates in 1934; of the 412 members in 1990—candidate status no longer existed—only fifty-eight (14 per cent) had been members or candidates in 1986, and only 15 per cent had ever held an elective position at the national level.<sup>10</sup> Even more remarkably, only seventeen members of the 1990 Central Committee had served as members or candidates in the years before *perestroika*, up to 1986; the longest-serving of them all was Boris Paton, president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, who had become a Central Committee member in 1961 under Khrushchev, and Gorbachev himself was one of the most senior, with a membership that dated back to 1971. Levels of turnover were less dramatic among central party and state officials (ten of the twenty-four central party officials, for instance, had previously been members); by contrast, only eight of the 190 in our 'production' and 'media, science, and arts' categories had been elected on a previous

<sup>8</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 13, 1988, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> The turnover among industrial managers and farm directors was reported by Gorbachev in *Pravda*, 31 May 1989, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 4, lists 57 members of the outgoing Central Committee. In addition, Nikolai Ogarkov had been elected in 1986; he was dropped in 1989, but returned in 1990.

**Table 6.1.** Turnover of CC members, 1981–1990

Congress	26th	27th	28th
	Feb.–Mar. 1981	Feb.–Mar. 1986	July 1990
Full members	319	307	412
Candidate members	151	170	—
Total members/candidates	470	477	412
In previous CC	333	259	58
Not in previous CC	137	218	354
In next CC	259	58	—
Not in next CC	211	419	—
Turnover (%)	22	45	88

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as the percentage of all Central Committee members and candidates elected at the *previous* congress who were not re-elected. Candidate member status did not exist at the 28th Congress.

occasion, although this was largely a reflection of the very considerable increase that had taken place in this entire category of membership (see Table 6.2).<sup>11</sup>

We have discussed in earlier chapters the process by which the Central Committee was formed. The process of ‘election’ of the first Central Committee of the Gorbachev period, in March 1986, had much in common with the practice that had been followed over the previous seventy years. From Lenin’s time came the definitive ‘list’ put forward by the top leadership and approved as a whole by the congress delegates; from Stalin’s time came the job slots, an *ex officio* system under which the top leadership list largely consisted of those already appointed (by the same top leadership) to certain key state and party posts. Khrushchev had not attempted to change these arrangements. Under the more cautious Brezhnev leadership the job slots continued, although there was a more complicated process of negotiation. A list was put forward by republican party organizations in advance of each party congress, which reflected personal as well as other considerations; the list was considered by the Central Committee apparatus and then submitted to the Politburo for final approval.<sup>12</sup> The single list was then approved unanimously by the congress, even though its members—particularly its token members—had sometimes no prior warning they had been included.<sup>13</sup> There was still

<sup>11</sup> The discussion that follows is based, unless otherwise stated, on the authors’ database. For a fuller account of the 1990 Central Committee and its composition, see Evan Mawdsley, ‘The 1990 Central Committee in Perspective’, *Soviet Studies*, 43: 5 (1991), 897–912.

<sup>12</sup> V. K. Akulintsev interview, September 1992, Soviet Elite Project (SEP). Akulintsev was first secretary of the Karaganda regional committee from 1968 to 1979.

<sup>13</sup> The Moscow metalworker Sergei Antonov, for instance, thought he had misheard when his name was read out at the 23rd Congress in 1966 (*Svet ne v okne* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977), 196).

scope for the national leadership to promote their own favourites: Brezhnev's doctor, for instance, Evgenii Chazov, was encouraged in this way before the 26th Party Congress in 1981. 'You are going to be nominated to the CC,' Andropov told him shortly beforehand, evidently assuming the Kremlin doctor would be one of his supporters; 'I'm sure there'll be no problems'. Brezhnev himself expressed some surprise, but Chazov duly joined the Central Committee as a candidate in 1981 and was promoted to full membership some months later, at the plenum in May 1982 at which Andropov himself was promoted to the Secretariat.<sup>14</sup>

A similar system, generally based on job slots but allowing some flexibility, was followed at the 27th Congress in 1986. Most of the same job slots were represented in 1986 as they had been in 1981, but in many cases new and younger officials occupied the posts, and this accounted for the high level of turnover as compared with 1981. The elections took place, as usual, at a closed session of the congress towards the end of its proceedings, with the 'nomination of candidates for the secret ballot of members of the CC CPSU, candidate members of the CC CPSU, and members of the Auditing Commission of the CPSU'. The following morning, 6 March 1986, the results were announced to another closed session. Later in the day an open meeting of the congress took place, at which the members of the presidium of the congress and of the heads of the delegations of foreign communist, workers' and revolutionary-democratic parties were greeted with 'stormy applause' and a standing ovation. Gorbachev announced that the first plenum of the newly elected Central Committee had already taken place, and that it had unanimously elected the party's leading bodies. He himself had been elected general secretary ('prolonged applause'); he also announced the other members of the leadership, who were greeted with 'applause'. His own closing speech, once again, was greeted with 'stormy, prolonged applause' and a standing ovation.<sup>15</sup>

This was still a very Soviet 'election', and Gorbachev and his associates soon began to consider a more far-reaching process of renewal that would accelerate the retirement of their opponents and at the same time open up the party to the kinds of democratizing changes that they were seeking to introduce elsewhere in society. The formation of the Central Committee was governed by a set of party rules which made it clear that changes in its membership—other than dismissals for unworthy conduct—could take place only at party congresses. But there had, in fact, been additions as well as promotions from full to candidate status at the 18th Party Conference in 1941,<sup>16</sup> and when Gorbachev proposed

<sup>14</sup> Evgenii Chazov, *Zdorov'e i vlast'. Vospominaniia kremlevskogo vracha* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992), 164–5.

<sup>15</sup> XXVII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz, 25 fevralia–6 marta 1986 goda: *Stenograficheskii otchet*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), ii. 294–7.

<sup>16</sup> See p. 95.



the convening of another in a speech to the Central Committee in 1987 he pointed out that conferences had previously considered matters of this kind.<sup>17</sup> In the event, the 19th Party Conference, when it met in June and July 1988, made no changes in the composition of the Central Committee; but it did agree that in future up to 20 per cent of the membership of party committees at all levels could be replaced during the intervals between congresses. Party office-holders, in the future, were to be selected by a secret and competitive ballot; and as a 'guarantee against stagnation' the conference agreed that they would be allowed to remain in their positions for no more than two consecutive five-year terms.<sup>18</sup> The 1990 party congress, when it met, went still further, adopting an entirely new set of rules which established that in future up to a third of the members of a new Central Committee could be replaced before the following congress had taken place.<sup>19</sup>

There was, in fact, a still more remarkable change in Central Committee membership before the 1990 congress, although it was formally a case of resignation and promotion rather than a new election.<sup>20</sup> At a plenum that took place on 25 April 1989, seventy-four full and twenty-four candidate members resigned their positions (four other members elected in 1986 had already been dismissed, mostly on corruption charges); in addition there were twelve resignations from the Central Auditing Commission, which was responsible for party housekeeping. A mass resignation of this kind was 'unprecedented in the history of the party'; it arose, Gorbachev explained, because eighty-three full members and twenty-seven candidates had by this time retired from the party or state positions they originally occupied, a point that was also made in the letter that was sent to the Central Committee in the joint name of those about to resign from its ranks 'for the good of the cause'.<sup>21</sup> Of the ninety-eight who retired, twenty-six were central state officials (mostly ministers) and twenty-eight were regional party secretaries; of the twenty-four promoted from candidate to full voting status, nearly half were workers or collective farmers, and four more were drawn from the ranks of the Acad-

<sup>17</sup> Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, v. 156.

<sup>18</sup> This was not, strictly speaking, a change in the party rules but rather an agreed recommendation. See XIX *Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia KPSS: Stenograficheskiĭ otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988), ii. 141-4.

<sup>19</sup> *Materialy XXVIII s"ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), Rule 26, p. 119.

<sup>20</sup> For a full discussion of the April 1989 changes see Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White, 'Renewal and Dead Souls: The Changing Soviet Central Committee', *British Journal of Political Science*, 20: 4 (Oct. 1990), 537-42.

<sup>21</sup> This still left nine full and three candidate 'dead souls', according to Gorbachev's calculations (*Pravda*, 26 Apr. 1989, p. 1); on the other hand six newly appointed republican first secretaries as well as 88 obkom first secretaries remained outside the CC: *ibid.*, 27 Apr. 1989, p. 3. For the departing members' collective letter of resignation see *ibid.*, 26 Apr. 1989, p. 1. The 'unprecedented' nature of the mass resignation is noted in V. I. Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak . . . Iz dnevnika chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Sovet veteranov knigoizdaniia, 1995), 259.

emy of Sciences.<sup>22</sup> Five of those promoted, despite the emphasis on renewal, were in fact in their sixties.<sup>23</sup>

The resignations that took place at this time were less spontaneous than they appeared. Gorbachev had already instructed the party apparatus to prepare a list of Central Committee members who had retired or were otherwise of an advanced age. Georgii Razumovskii, who was responsible for party appointments, then began to approach individuals on the list who might be prepared to lead the way, and who in their turn might help to 'persuade any waverers'. He did it so well that when the volunteers assembled in the Party Secretariat, 'there was no problem at all; they even began to justify the reasons for their resignations'. Two meetings were held, the first with those whose willingness to resign was not in doubt, the second with members who were thought to be more reluctant: but in the end there was no resistance apart from Efim Slavskii, over 90 years old and minister of medium machine-building from 1957 until November 1986. The last survivor among the first generation of leaders, he refused to attend the meeting at which his colleagues had been persuaded to resign and followed the plenum itself with an ironic smile.<sup>24</sup> One result of the resignations of so many of Slavskii's younger and less recalcitrant colleagues was that it became noticeably easier to move around the room in which plenums were held; the Central Committee's full membership fell from its original 307 to 251, as low as it had been since the 1960s, and by July 1990 it had fallen further to 248, with 108 candidates.<sup>25</sup>

Nikolai Baibakov, one of those who resigned in April 1989, was in his late seventies and had already resigned as chief planner after more than twenty years of service (see pp. 119–26, 146–7). Returning home one evening, he found an invitation to attend a meeting in the Central Committee offices, the one that had been convened by Razumovskii. As it turned out, he was not the only one who had been invited: in fact a 'large group of party veterans' was present, including the former foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, former prime minister Nikolai Tikhonov, and former Central Committee secretary Vladimir Dolgikh. The former minister of heavy and transport machinery, Sergei Afanas'ev, began the proceedings by asking to be relieved of his membership; others spoke in similar terms. The arguments were reasonable enough: *perestroika* needed the entire energies of CC members,

<sup>22</sup> Mawdsley and White, 'Renewal and Dead Souls', 541. There were 32 promotions altogether between 1986 and 1990: *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 9, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 5, 1990, p. 6. The five, born in 1928 or earlier, were: V. M. Falin, V. A. Masol, M. F. Nenashev, I. A. Pentiukhov, and E. M. Primakov.

<sup>24</sup> V. I. Boldin, *Krushenie p'edestala: Sbrikkii k portretu M. S. Gorbacheva* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995), 195–6. The Ministry of Medium Machine Building, formally speaking, ceased to exist between 1963 and 1965. Slavskii's reaction was observed by another Central Committee member who was seated nearby (Aleksandr Kapto, *Na perekrestkakh zhizni. Politicheskie memuary* (Moscow: Sotsial'no-politicheskii zhurnal, 1996), 151).

<sup>25</sup> Kapto, *Na perekrestkakh zhizni*, 198; *Izvestiia TsK*, no. 9, 1990, p. 19.

and in any case the party's leading levels had to be renewed from time to time. An appeal to the party leadership had already been prepared and was ready for their signature; Gorbachev, in his response, thanked them for the appeal and wished them well.<sup>26</sup> 'Probably it was justified', reflected Vladimir Listov, who had retired as minister of the chemical industry in 1986, but who retained his own Central Committee membership until the 1990 congress: 'We who had joined the leadership before *perestroika* knew our time would come.'<sup>27</sup>

Petr Tret'iakov, who had been party first secretary in Sakhalin, was less philosophical when he recalled their departure some years later. They had been expelled from the Central Committee, as he put it, 'like a herd of cattle'; but only one of them had objected in spite of the fact that the whole exercise was a clear violation of the party rules.<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Solomentsev, himself in charge of party discipline as head of the Committee of Party Control, thought the mass expulsion 'not just a mistake but a grave violation' of the party rules, and also wondered why so many had agreed to leave. He had been at the second of the two meetings that had taken place in party headquarters before the mass resignation. There were too many pensioners in the Central Committee, Gorbachev had told them. The tasks that they confronted were difficult and demanding; it was time for new blood. In fact, as Solomentsev pointed out, not a single new member joined at the April plenum, while a great many older members with a wealth of relevant experience had been forced to retire. The result was a 'heavy blow to the party', whose real aim, he thought, was to eliminate potential opposition to the policies that Gorbachev was already determined to pursue. In Solomentsev's own view the decision was not a proper one and he and others were still members of the Central Committee 'in reality' up to the 1990 Congress, although they had not been invited to later plenums (one of those who resigned in April 1989, Marshal Ogarkov, did in fact return in 1990 as chairman of the association of veterans).<sup>29</sup>

After the 1986 congress and the resignations of 1989 came something even more dramatic, the formation of a completely new Central Committee at the 28th Congress of 1990, in a different and 'very complicated manner'. One of its new members, economist Leonid Abalkin, observed that in a democratizing society it was hard to justify the traditional arrangement by which Central Committee members were chosen by the heads of delegations basing themselves in turn upon the job-slot system rather than the congress as a whole.<sup>30</sup> Gorbachev had himself decided two years earlier that the Central Committee should be a rather smaller working body with a membership that was made up of 'revolutionaries of *pere-*

<sup>26</sup> N. K. Baibakov, *Sorok let v pravitel'stve* (Moscow: Respublika, 1993), 295–6.

<sup>27</sup> V. V. Listov interview, July 1993, SEP.

<sup>28</sup> P. I. Tret'iakov interview, August 1993, SEP.

<sup>29</sup> M. S. Solomentsev interview, May 1993, SEP.

<sup>30</sup> L. A. Abalkin, *Neispol'zovannyi shans. Poltora goda v pravitel'stve* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 192–3.

*stroika*' rather than a pre-selected group of office-holders.<sup>31</sup> Speaking in February 1990, he suggested a Central Committee that 'worked on a full-time basis' and avoided the largely *ex officio* membership that had in practice been a 'reflection of the party-state power system'.<sup>32</sup> Confident that a change of this kind could now be made, he drew up his own list for presentation to the party congress later in the year, with Abalkin—director of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences and also a deputy premier—as one of his nominations. In the event, more than a third of the delegates voted against Abalkin's candidature; but the economist stood his ground, and in the end it was agreed that all who had secured the support of more than half of the voting delegates would join the new CC.<sup>33</sup>

The paradox was that scrapping the job-slot system did not give Gorbachev the Central Committee he wanted. By 1990 there had been a considerable loss of central control, and the mood at local level had shifted markedly against the reform process; in the Central Committee itself there had been a 'sharp increase in hostility towards the general secretary' as its members found they were unable to persuade him to allow them to discuss the current situation rather than much broader and abstract issues. Valerii Boldin, the head of Gorbachev's administration, found the general secretary at work on his own list of nominations during the 28th Congress in 1990, 'abandoned and forlorn' as Razumovskii had retired and Ligachev was now a declared opponent of further reform.<sup>34</sup> The outcome, in spite of his efforts, was a Central Committee that was 'overwhelmingly composed of Ligachevites and Polozkovites';<sup>35</sup> the job-slot system was no longer sustainable now that delegates insisted on more adequate representation of the rank and file, and upon their own right to vote on the nominations that were put forward.

The general secretary and his deputy were automatically included in the new Central Committee; the remaining places were chosen by delegates at the congress from two lists that the leadership had prepared for their consideration.<sup>36</sup> The first was chosen in the usual way on a quota basis that allowed five places for each

<sup>31</sup> A. S. Cherniaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym. Po dnevnikovym zapisiam* (Moscow: Progress/Kul'tura, 1993), 234.

<sup>32</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS 5–7 fevralia 1990 g.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Abalkin, *Neispol'zovannyi shans*, 193–4 (1,681 of the 4,683 votes were cast against his candidature; there were 1,768 votes against the actor Mikhail Ul'ianov and 1,875 against the political commentator Roy Medvedev, but most of all (2,000) against the head of the Central Committee apparatus Nikolai Kruchina (p. 193)). Another delegate suggested that Abalkin stand down (XXVIII s'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 2–13 iulia 1990 g.: *Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), ii. 509); the figure for those entitled to vote is in *ibid.* 536.

<sup>34</sup> Boldin, *Krushenie*, p. 366; the increasing hostility towards Gorbachev is noted in Kapto, *Na perekrestkakh zhizni*, 149.

<sup>35</sup> Cherniaev, *Shest' let*, 357. The Russian party first secretary Ivan Polozkov was another of Gorbachev's opponents in the leadership.

<sup>36</sup> This account is based upon XXVIII s'ezd, ii. 494–528; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 3; A. V. Buzgalin, *Belaia vorona. Poslednii god zhizni TsK KPSS: vzgliad iznutri* (Moscow: Tretii put', 1993), 74; and Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak*, 393–4, 402.

republic and a further representative for each 100,000 of their membership, making a total of 311. The second was a 'central list' of eighty-five, in practice the personal choice of the general secretary, based largely on the party and government apparatus and including the prime minister as well as the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, the heads of Gosplan and the KGB, and the ministers of internal affairs and defence. There was a modest sensation when a military delegate proposed the withdrawal of defence minister Iazov and the head of the General Staff Moiseev on the grounds that they were not genuinely committed to *perestroika*; Boris Yeltsin, recently elected chairman of the Russian parliament, withdrew his candidacy and then resigned from the party altogether, as did a number of other delegates representing the reformist Democratic Platform. The two lists, with Yeltsin excluded but supplemented by a further thirteen names that had emerged from the floor of the congress, were finally confirmed by a ballot of delegates.<sup>37</sup> The composition of the Central Committee changed again over the following year as it accepted resignations, promoted candidates, and—quite improperly—added to its own membership.<sup>38</sup>

The complex elite revolution of 1985–90 had major implications for the composition of the Central Committee, although it took some time for the changes to extend from individuals to the 'job-slot' system. Although the turnover rate for individuals had doubled in 1986 compared with the two congresses that preceded it, there had in fact been very little change at Gorbachev's first congress in the representation of key occupational groups. At the 1990 congress, as we have seen, there were sharp changes in the basis on which the Central Committee was formed (see Table 6.2). The job-slot system was not entirely abandoned, but it underwent its biggest change since the 1920s. The representation of central party officials dropped to about half its previous level; the number of central state officials fell dramatically as the assumption that a ministerial position should normally command a place in the Central Committee was almost entirely discarded (there were fifty-five ministers in the 1986 CC, but only six in 1990). There was a greater degree of continuity in republican and regional party representation (although most of the individuals were different), and central, republican, and regional party officials still constituted the core of the new Central Committee with about a third of the total, compared with two-fifths under the old regime. All of the republics were represented, most often by a first and second secretary; the Russian republic was represented by its first secretary, a new position, although

<sup>37</sup> The Central Committee as elected in 1990 is listed in *Materialy XXVIII s"ezda*, 195–9. The 85 are identified as Gorbachev's 'personal list' in Cherniaev, *Shest' let*, 357.

<sup>38</sup> The April 1991 Central Committee plenum added the newly elected Kirgiz first secretary, D. A. Amanbaev, as a full member; under the rules only a congress or—after 1990—party conference could properly make such decisions. *Materialy ob"edinennogo Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta i Tsentral'noi kontrol'noi komissii KPSS 24–25 aprelia 1991 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 5.

**Table 6.2.** Job-slot representation of CC members, 1981–1990

	1981 CC		1986 CC		1990 CC	
		(%)		(%)		(%)
Central party	44	9	43	9	21	5
Central state	114	24	113	24	24	6
Republic party	32	7	34	7	27	7
Republic state	36	8	33	7	18	4
Regional party	112	24	115	24	73	18
Regional state	4	1	4	1	2	0
Local party	—	—	—	—	41	10
Military	36	8	36	8	11	3
Police	4	1	5	1	3	1
Diplomatic	22	5	23	5	2	0
Media/Science/Arts	27	6	27	6	58	14
Production	39	8	44	9	132	32
TOTAL	470	100	477	100	412	100

*Notes:* ‘Central state’ excludes ministers for the armed forces and foreign affairs, but includes trade-union officials. ‘Republic party’ refers to *union* republics. ‘Regions’ include level of oblast’, krai, ASSR, AO, as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. ‘Diplomatic’ includes Foreign Ministry officials and ambassadors. ‘Local party’ was a category effectively introduced for the first time in 1990. It included ‘token’ secretaries of party committees for low-level territories (districts and minor towns) (12), factories (16), farms (6), educational institutions (4), or small military units (3). Three junior military personnel are included either in Media/Science/Arts (one lecturer) or Production (two junior officers).

the republic’s representation in the new Central Committee was down very considerably as more than a third of the Russian regional first secretaries lost the right of membership they had almost always enjoyed in earlier years. A quarter of the new Central Committee had been elected members of the Congress of People’s Deputies the year before, and a further 14 per cent were deputies in republican assemblies.<sup>39</sup>

The representation of local party bodies on the Central Committee meanwhile increased sharply, as part of a declared intention to shift power to the ‘party masses’. Many of the new members were urban party officials, but even more—sixteen—were the party secretaries of larger factories or combines. Military and diplomatic representation were both down: the number of senior military commanders fell by two-thirds, and the only diplomats included were the foreign minister and the ambassador to the USA. At the same time there was a dramatic

<sup>39</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 4 (of the total, 11 or 2.7% belonged to parliaments in autonomous republics and 46 or 11.2% to parliaments in union republics).

increase in the number of 'mass representatives' from a wide range of less exalted occupations. The new members were people like Obidzhon Abobakirov, a tractor operative from an Uzbek state farm; Zarlyk Kaliev, a shepherd from Kazakhstan; and Zukhra Bairamkulova, a milkmaid from Stavropol' who had failed to complete her secondary schooling. But there were also journalists like the editor of *Izvestiia*, Nikolai Efimov, the reformist editor of the party's theoretical journal *Kommunist*, Nail' Bikkenin, and his deputy Otto Latsis. The historian and commentator Roy Medvedev, expelled from the CPSU in the late 1960s, was another new member; so was the writer Vasilii Belov, and the outspoken actor Mikhail Ul'ianov. And there were many new academics, including several directors of institutes of the Academy of Sciences and the presidents of six of the republican Academies. A full three-quarters of the new Central Committee had a higher education, with fifty-five holders of higher doctorates and eighteen full and corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences.<sup>40</sup>

The Gorbachev years saw a further advance in the representation of women at leading levels, and the Central Committee reflected these trends. The number of women full or candidate members of the Central Committee in 1986 was virtually the same as in 1981 (twenty-one out of 477 compared with nineteen out of 470); in 1990, however, there was a significant jump to thirty-three out of 412 (or 8 per cent), although this was well below their 30 per cent share of party membership and, more strikingly, the 34 per cent that women represented among the secretaries of primary party organizations.<sup>41</sup> Women, moreover, had increased their representation most substantially among the token workers who joined the Central Committee in greater numbers at the 1990 congress, and only two—Galina Semenova, a Central Committee Secretary, and Elena Kalinina, a Leningrad party official—were figures of genuine political authority.

At least as significant were the changes that took place in the representation of the different Soviet nationalities (see Table 6.3). The sharpest individual change was the reduction in the proportion of Russians, from 71 per cent in 1986 to 52 per cent in 1990. This was a level that was above the Russian share of total population but below their share of party membership—about 58 per cent at this time. Reflecting the strong pressure that had been exercised on behalf of other nationalities and their republican party organizations, there were increases in all other categories: Ukrainians and Belorussians edged up from 11.7 to 12.3 per cent and from 4.4 to 4.6 per cent respectively; and Baltic representation more than doubled (from 1.3 to 2.9 per cent), although the numbers involved were very small. The

<sup>40</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 4; and for a different breakdown of the CC as a whole, pp. 3–4. Detailed biographies of the new Central Committee members are available in *ibid.*, no. 10, 1990, pp. 27–61; no. 11, pp. 31–62; and no. 12, pp. 27–56. On the 'mass representatives' see William A. Clark, 'Token Representation in the CPSU Central Committee', *Soviet Studies*, 43: 5 (1991), 913–29.

<sup>41</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, pp. 113, 115. For a fuller discussion see Peter Lentini, 'A Note on Women in the CPSU Central Committee, 1990', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45: 4 (1993), 729–36.

**Table 6.3.** Nationality of CC members, 1981–1990

	1981 CC		1986 CC		1990 CC	
	(%)		(%)		(%)	
Russian	328	70	341	71	214	52
Ukrainian	63	13	56	12	51	12
Belorussian	13	3	21	4	19	5
Caucasus	14	3	12	3	40	10
Central Asia	23	5	23	5	55	13
Baltic	10	2	7	1	12	3
Other	19	4	17	4	21	5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	470	100	477	100	412	100

*Notes:* 'Other' includes up to a dozen groups, from Moldavians to Yakuts, with one or two representatives in each; Germans, Jews, and Poles are in this group.

most considerable changes in relative terms were in the representation of the Caucasian nationalities (mainly Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis), from 2.5 to 9.7 per cent, and above all in the representation of Central Asians, from 5.3 per cent in 1986 to 13.3 per cent in 1990. The change was partly a reflection of the reduction that had taken place in the representation of ministers, generals, and diplomats, who were disproportionately Russian; but it also reflected the wish to create a party elite that would more adequately reflect the distribution of membership throughout the country, and one that was more likely to incorporate what might otherwise be separatist political aspirations.

There was a comparable change in the average age of Central Committee members. In 1981 it had been 60 and in 1986 58, taking full members and candidates together; in 1990 it fell sharply to 49. Members in their fifties were still the largest group in 1990, as they had been before, but the next most numerous were in their forties; those over 60—a third of the total in 1981—were down to 10 per cent, and there were only two Central Committee members in their seventies (in 1981 there had been 79). By contrast, in 1990 there were three members in their late twenties, all of them industrial workers. The declining number of older members in 1990 also reflected the falling proportion of ministers, military commanders, and diplomats, who were normally older men, and the increasing number of representatives of local party branches and mass organizations.

The logical consequence of rejuvenation at the 1986 and 1990 congresses was a far-reaching change in the generational make-up of the Central Committee (see Table 6.4). Up to the penultimate Brezhnev congress in 1976, a dozen years after Khrushchev's fall and a quarter of a century after the death of Stalin, the Central



**Table 6.4.** Generational breakdown of CC members, 1981–1990

	1981 CC	1986 CC	1990 CC
First generation	4	1	0
Second generation	219	81	2
Third generation	242	379	225
Fourth generation	5	16	185
TOTAL	470	477	412

*Note:* First generation born before 1900, second generation born 1901–20, third generation born 1921–40, fourth generation born after 1941.

Committee was still dominated—63 per cent of its total membership—by the ‘second generation’. The young Stalinists who rose to positions of authority before the Second World War had been the largest group in the Central Committee since 1952. Even in 1981 they still made up 47 per cent of the total, and among the full members—who held the highest posts in the land—they made up 52 per cent. The 1986 congress, however, saw a decisive generational shift, in that the second generation dropped sharply to just 17 per cent of the total membership. What was at work here was a dual but related process of demographic change—the youngest members of the ‘second generation’ had reached retirement age by 1986—and of deliberate rejuvenation pursued by a reformist leadership. Four years later, after the 1990 election, only two individuals from the second generation remained (both already mentioned), Boris Paton and Marshal Ogarkov.

The third generation of the elite, born between 1921 and 1940, the ones who had been held back in the Brezhnev years by long-serving second-generation regional secretaries and ministers, were now advancing into the desks of retiring Stalinists; and with such appointments came election to the Central Committee. It might be thought that the third generation marked a clear change as compared with the peasant boys of the second generation who had been children in the turmoil of the 1917 and the Civil War, who were products of the educational revolution of the first Five Year Plans, and who were then given life-and-death power in their early thirties. In fact there was little change in the basic social composition of the Central Committee between the two generations. Taking the 1981 Central Committee, when the total numbers of second- and third-generation members was most similar, the surprising finding emerges that 65 per cent of the third generation whose birthplace is known (145/222 [242]) had been born in villages—including Mikhail Gorbachev; this compares with a lower figure of 50 per cent village-born (105/209 [219]) for the second generation. The third generation had

grown up at a time of turmoil that was equal to or greater than that experienced by the second generation, in the 'quicksand society' of collectivization and industrialization; they were not adult contemporaries of the Purges in the sense that the second generation had been, but from their recollections we know that many had relatives who were affected (this applied to its most prominent individual member, Mikhail Gorbachev, and his wife).<sup>42</sup> Most of them grew to adulthood, moreover, at the height of the Stalin cult, in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The third generation were mostly too young to have fought in the war, although as teenagers they suffered its privations. But they were able to take advantage of a more settled educational system, at least by the time they had reached college age. They joined the Communist Party, most typically, in 1953, and shared the experience of the de-Stalinization that was launched in 1956; they were also united by the barrier to their advancement that the 'stability of cadres' had represented during the Brezhnev years.

The 1986 congress was in fact the apogee of the third generation; by 1990 its time had passed. Its share of Central Committee membership fell in parallel with that of the second generation, from 79 per cent in 1986 to 55 per cent in 1990. Such had been the log-jam of the Brezhnev years that third-generation members of the Central Committee were typically entering their seventh decade just as elite positions opened up under Gorbachev. The generation now coming forward were the 40-year olds of the fourth generation, born between 1941 and 1960. The fourth generation were different in many ways from their immediate predecessors. In particular, they reflected the more urbanized culture of the post-war years. The village-born still made up 51 per cent of the 1990 Central Committee (little different from 1986), but the change was masked by the greater proportion of non-Russians from less developed parts of the USSR. Among the ethnic Russians in the 1990 Central Committee the village-born made up only 43 per cent; among fourth-generation ethnic Russians it was only 37 per cent (compared to 49 per cent for third-generation ethnic Russians). Only the oldest members of this fourth generation had been alive during the war, and even the achievements of the post-war Five Year Plans were something to be taken for granted. They were children too of a society that was much more settled. They had joined the party in the Brezhnev years—the average year of party entry of the 1990 Central Committee was 1967, and for the fourth generation it was 1975. Only four years earlier, for the 1986 Central Committee as a whole, the average year of party entry had been 1953, the year of Stalin's death. Indeed, there were in 1990 two Central Committee members, both workers and fourth-generation, who had joined the party's ranks as recently as 1988.

<sup>42</sup> Gorbachev's maternal grandfather was released after torture had failed to extract a confession; his paternal grandfather spent two years in prison. His wife's father was arrested, and her grandfather had been shot for 'counter-revolutionary agitation' (M. S. Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), i. 38–42).

## The Gorbachev Elite

The regional first secretaries were still key political actors in the Gorbachev period, and in turn they made up a large proportion of the party elite that was represented in the Central Committee. There were 128 regions in the early 1980s, and more than a hundred were represented by their party first secretaries on the Central Committee that approved the election of Gorbachev in 1985 and then the initiation of a far-reaching programme of political and economic reform. One of their number was Viktor Dobrik, a regional party first secretary who served in the Ukraine from the late 1960s and as a full member of the Central Committee up to the collective resignation of April 1989; he was also the first Central Committee member we have considered who fell into our third generation, born between 1921 and 1940. Dobrik had been born in a village in the Nikolaev region of the republic in 1927, his Ukrainian parents both party members who had joined in the 'Lenin levy' that took place after the Soviet leader's death in 1924. His father went off to the front in 1941 and the family was evacuated to Barnaul, in Siberia; but they returned a couple of years later to Dneprodzerzhinsk where his mother worked in the local party apparatus and then as a schoolteacher, his father becoming director of a teacher-training college. Dobrik completed his schooling locally and enrolled in Dnepropetrovsk Railway Engineering Institute; he worked on the Gor'kii line after graduating and then, from 1951, in railway units of the Soviet army. He joined the Communist Party during these years, in 1954, while working on the line between Ulan Bator and Peking. Back in Dneprodzerzhinsk for a post-graduate course, he took a decisive step up in late 1957 when he became a deputy party secretary at the local hydroelectric station; he was a party official thereafter, although—he later insisted—'organically opposed' to the idea of a party work as a career.<sup>43</sup>

Dobrik moved up steadily in the late 1950s and 1960s: as first secretary of the city party committee at Dneprodzerzhinsk, as a candidate member of the Central Committee from 1966, and then as first secretary of the Ivano-Frankovsk regional party organization from 1969, a post that brought him full Central Committee membership in 1971 ('You'll go to western Ukraine and you'll speak Ukrainian there,' he was told by the republican first secretary Petr Shelest). Brezhnev's mother still lived in Dneprodzerzhinsk, and Brezhnev himself—then chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium—came once a year to visit her. His mother, it emerged, lived very simply in a flat that Brezhnev's father had obtained through the local factory in which he worked, and which she had no wish to improve. On

<sup>43</sup> V. F. Dobrik interview, August 1992, SEP. Additional biographical details have been taken from *Sostav tsentral'nykh organov KPSS, izbrannykh XXVI s"ezdom partii. Spravochnik* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1982), 155, and from the yearbooks of the *Bol'shaia sovetskaiia entsiklopediia* for 1966, 1971, and 1977.



**6.1** Viktor Dobrik, pictured in 1970 on his election as a USSR Supreme Soviet deputy (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)

his visit in August 1964, two months before Khrushchev was forced into resignation, Brezhnev began to talk openly about the local officials who had been coming to him and complaining ‘it can’t go on like this’. In the discussion—with an embarrassed Dobrik in attendance—there was an increasingly clear consensus that ‘Nikita had to go’. Brezhnev promised he would consult further and then take some action, ‘otherwise everything will collapse’. Vladimir Shcherbitskii, ousted from the Ukrainian premiership the year before, was the most insistent of all that Khrushchev had ‘to be removed at once’. Was this, Dobrik wondered, why he himself had become a member of the Central Committee two years later, so that he would feel under an obligation not to betray the trust that had been placed in him at this time? At all events, the food supply improved quickly after Brezhnev had taken over—‘literally within a year’—and Dobrik was able to build up a good working relationship with the new leader and with the officials who worked in national party headquarters, apart from the ‘terrible people’ in the ideology department who complained about the continuing influence of nationalism and religion in the area he represented.

Dobrik came to national party prominence through a policy innovation that was held up as an example to others: the use of 'waggon-hours' rather than volume as an indicator of load factors in the regional railway system. The 'waggon-hours' system was pioneered in the L'vov region, where Dobrik had secured the first secretaryship in November 1973, and where it cut the waste of transport capacity by half. The system was extended to neighbouring areas; it was welcomed in a Central Committee resolution of June 1981 which urged party organizations to extend the method more widely, and praised by the ministry of transport.<sup>44</sup> In an even more significant advance, Dobrik had sponsored the introduction of a system of quality control in the leading enterprises of the region in the early 1970s. Once again, it was taken up by the Central Committee in a resolution of 1975 that approved the 'integrated system for the management of the quality of production' that had been developed in L'vov and encouraged its wider application.<sup>45</sup> An all-union seminar of party activists and managers took place in L'vov the following year to study the implications of the new method, and it was praised by Brezhnev at a meeting of the Central Committee in October 1976. Dobrik himself became a candidate member of the Ukrainian Politburo in February 1976; those responsible for the new system were awarded state prizes for technology the following year, and in 1979 he was one of those who were chosen to accompany the party leader on an official visit to Hungary.<sup>46</sup>

Dobrik was initially enthusiastic about the changes associated with *perestroika*, but then came the 'idiotic resolution' on alcoholism of May 1985, which had introduced a number of severe restrictions.<sup>47</sup> Two months later a party commission came from Moscow to examine progress: how, they asked, could the regional party leadership be carrying out the resolution if there were queues outside liquor stores in Moscow and Kiev but none in L'vov? But there was little chance to put his reservations to the Central Committee itself as Dobrik was given just a single

<sup>44</sup> See V. F. Dobrik, *O rabote organizatsii zbeleznodorozhnogo transporta i promyshlennosti L'vovskoi oblasti po effektivnomu ispol'zovaniiu vagonov* (L'vov: Seminar-soveshchanie po effektivnomu ispol'zovaniiu vagonov, 1981), 7–11. The Central Committee resolution of June 1981 appears in *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 9th edn., 15 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1983–9), xiv. 160–2. Dobrik's appointment at L'vov was reported in *Pravda Ukrainy*, 29 Nov. 1973, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 8th edn., 14 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1970–82), xii. 35–9 (omitted from the 9th edition).

<sup>46</sup> See V. F. Dobrik and B. P. Baiborodov, *Tseli, printsipy i metody upravleniia kachestvom produktov* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1978), 28, 32, 77, 130–1. Brezhnev's positive remarks about the L'vov party committee at the Oct. 1976 plenum included a direct reference to its first secretary (*Pravda*, 26 Oct. 1976, p. 1). Dobrik explained the L'vov method in two other publications: Dobrik and E. T. Udovichenko, *Upravlenie kachestvom: problemy i ikh realizatsiia* (L'vov: Kameniar, 1978), and Dobrik and Udovichenko, *Nauchno-tekhnikheskie i obschestvennye problemy upravleniia kachestvom. Opyt L'vovskoi oblasti* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo standartov, 1980). His visit to Hungary was reported in *Pravda*, 31 May 1979, p. 1; rather earlier he had visited Italy in a delegation headed by Andrei Kirilenko (*ibid.*, 27 June 1968, p. 5).

<sup>47</sup> The campaign is considered more fully in Stephen White, *Russia Goes Dry: Alcohol, State and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

opportunity to address a high-level audience, a sharply worded and—as he recalled it—warmly applauded attack on the republican party leadership (he was told afterwards by Shcherbitskii that no further contributions of this kind would be required).<sup>48</sup> Dobrik came under attack soon afterwards (a report in *Pravda* in September 1985 noted that there was a ‘great distance’ between the region’s plans and its achievements, for which its party leadership was primarily responsible).<sup>49</sup> Dobrik, either because of his organizational abilities or his protection in Kiev, survived the transition to the Gorbachev leadership, but although he professed to welcome the ‘consistent democratization’ that had been launched in January 1987 he was accused of ‘serious shortcomings’ and forced to resign later in the year, leaving the Central Committee with other ‘dead souls’ in April 1989.<sup>50</sup> Like the second-generation Vsevolozhskii, his comrade among the Ukrainian regional secretaries (pp. 176–9), the third-generation Dobrik was one of the success stories of the Brezhnev regional leadership. He was also another who found his methods of work out of step with the demands of a reforming leadership.

Erlén Pervyshin was also from the third generation, but he represented a very different career type: he was a successful minister and technocrat.<sup>51</sup> Pervyshin was himself from a military family, and moved repeatedly during his childhood years. Born in a small town in the Tambov region of central Russia in 1932, he went to school in the town of Kislovodsk in Stavropol’ region and then moved to the capital to enrol in the Moscow Electrotechnical Institute of Communications (MEIS). Pervyshin was a representative of the well-trained post-war technical intelligentsia created under the wing of the military-industrial complex. During the 1950s, as Pervyshin recalled, ‘the whole country was a building site’: towns and factories were being restored, new scientific centres were being established, and military industries were being converted to civilian purposes. After his graduation Pervyshin went on to work in ‘Tomsk-7’ and ‘Krasnoiarsk-26’, two of the secret

<sup>48</sup> Dobrik interview, SEP.

<sup>49</sup> See ‘Uroki i vyvody’, *Pravda*, 25 Sept. 1985, p. 2. The Ukrainian and regional party organizations acknowledged the force of the paper’s criticism in *ibid.*, 1 Nov. 1985, p. 2; Dobrik was nonetheless re-elected to his first secretaryship later in the year: *ibid.*, 18 Dec. 1985, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 6, 1987, p. 12; his resignation was reported in *Pravda*, 21 Mar. 1987, p. 4. Dobrik was also criticized at a plenary meeting of the Ukrainian Central Committee: *ibid.*, 28 Mar. 1987, p. 2. He himself explained that he had been dissatisfied with the conduct of the leadership after the Chernobyl explosion and had been forced out (Dobrik interview, SEP); it has also been suggested that, as the first secretaries of the Voroshilovgrad and Dnepropetrovsk obkoms had been obliged to resign at about the same time, his removal might have been connected with a larger campaign to undermine the Ukrainian leader Vladimir Shcherbitskii (*Radio Liberty Research* RL 164/1987, 2 Apr. 1987). Dobrik was succeeded by another veteran, Ia. P. Pogrebniak, born in 1928 and a full-time party official; he was succeeded in turn by V. V. Sekretariuk, who duly took up the region’s ‘job-slot’ position in the 1990 Central Committee.

<sup>51</sup> E. K. Pervyshin interview, September 1992, SEP. Pervyshin discussed some of the work of his ministry in ‘Iz istorii promyshlennosti sredstv svyazi SSSR’, *Voprosy istorii, estestvoznaniia i tekhniki*, no. 3, 1983, pp. 75–80, and more extensively in Pervyshin *et al.*, *Industriia peredachi informatsii* (Moscow: Radio i sviaz’, 1984).

cities in Siberia that produced the communications systems that linked the country's nuclear bases. He was absorbed by the work and reacted without much enthusiasm when he was invited to take a desk job in the State Committee for Radio Electronics: 'but an order is an order.' Pervyshin, during these years, was rarely in the office, more often travelling around the country to work on new communication systems; he was also involved in the installation of equipment in the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin, which opened in 1961. Huge resources were committed to all of these developments; and everything, because of Western trade policy, had to be manufactured locally.

Pervyshin had become a party member in 1959, and by the 1960s he was directing the 'Cascade' combine in Moscow, a huge engineering operation employing more than 30,000 specialist staff which bore primary responsibility for manufacturing the country's anti-aircraft and missile defence systems. But he could not—as a party member—refuse an invitation from the Central Committee's defence department in 1970 to move into the Ministry of the Radio Industry, as a deputy minister: he was simply told—'you must'. One of Pervyshin's first responsibilities was to head a special group with responsibility for establishing a secure communications system for the top leadership wherever it was located, a task they had accomplished by the mid-1970s. At the same time a new generation of satellites was being brought into production to connect all military command systems to a national network. Pervyshin moved in 1974 into the Ministry of the Communications Industry, and into a full ministerial position; he was just 42. There was a 'serious warning' from party headquarters about the quality of Soviet television sets, and he was criticized directly by Gorbachev in his address to the Central Committee in June 1987;<sup>52</sup> but in 1989, after some vigorous observations about the backwardness of the entire industry as compared with its Western counterparts, he was confirmed as minister by the newly elected Supreme Soviet.<sup>53</sup>

In the same year there were further changes in ministerial structures, and the Ministry of the Communications Industry was brought back together with the Ministry of Communications; with over 3 million employees, it was to take responsibility for everything from telephone calls to entire communication systems. Pervyshin was reluctant to head this new super-ministry, and said so at the Central Committee plenum at which his name was proposed; but his candidature was supported by the Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbaev and many others, and he found that once again it was an offer he could not refuse.<sup>54</sup> Later still, the factories that belonged to the Ministry of the Communications Industry formed a holding company, 'Telekom', and Pervyshin became its chairman, resigning from

<sup>52</sup> Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, v. 150.

<sup>53</sup> *Pervaiia sessiia Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR: Stenograficheskii otchet, chast' VI, 10–12 iuliia 1989 g.* (Moscow: Izdanie Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, 1989), 75–86.

<sup>54</sup> A brief report appeared in *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 30 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 42–3.



**6.2** Erlen Pervyshin, a candidate and then full member of the Central Committee between 1976 and 1990 (Novosti)

his government post in early 1991. It was the end of a seventeen-year tenure and typical in this sense of the Brezhnev period, although it was not as lengthy a tenure as that of his counterpart in the Communications Ministry, Nikolai Psurtsev, in office from 1948 to 1975.

A senior industrial minister during the Brezhnev years automatically became a member of the Central Committee and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. Pervyshin joined the CC as a candidate member in 1976 and moved up to full membership ten years later, under Gorbachev; he was not re-elected in 1990, but this was the time when the job-slot system of the Central Committee was transformed and the mass of government ministers were no longer expected to serve. (Pervyshin was also a Supreme Soviet deputy for a Georgian constituency between 1974 and 1989.) But even before 1990, as Pervyshin put it, ministers such as he were 'specialists in their field and hardly involved in politics'. They rarely addressed party congresses or the Supreme Soviet, speaking more often at the weekly meetings of the Council of Ministers and at the Military-Industrial Commission that brought together the leading figures in the defence sector. And it was figures of this kind who, like Pervyshin, often found that their technical and organizational skills were



more readily adaptable to the political changes of the late 1980s and, indeed, to post-communist conditions. This was particularly true, as we shall see in Chapter 8, of Central Committee members who worked in finance or management or in a field in which their professional skills were relevant, although these were typically figures for whom Central Committee membership was an attachment to their post rather than the locus of their political activity.

Viktor Mishin was representative of another constituency among the Central Committee membership, the All-Union Leninist Communist Union of Youth or Komsomol.<sup>55</sup> The first three Komsomol leaders—Efim Tsetlin, Oskar Ryvkin, and Lazar' Shatskin—had at no point been members of the party's elected institutions, and their successor, Petr Smorodin, joined the Central Committee in 1930 some time after he had served as Komsomol first secretary. The first secretary who succeeded him in 1924, Nikolai Chaplin, was the first to serve on the Central Committee as a representative of the Komsomol itself; and apart from his immediate successor, all later Komsomol first secretaries took their place in the Central Committee as of right, from Alexander Kosarev in the 1930s up to Mishin and his successor, Viktor Mironenko, in the 1980s. The early Komsomol leaders, up to the late 1930s, were very young, and they had at least one other characteristic: all were arrested, and all but two of them were shot.<sup>56</sup> 'We sometimes forget', as Mironenko reminded our interviewer, 'that the first victims of Stalinism were Komsomol and party officials.'<sup>57</sup> Under the party rules as they stood in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Komsomol was an 'independent public organization of youth, the active assistant and reserve of the party', and worked under party supervision at all levels. Viktor Mishin was its first secretary during the 1980s, from 1982 to 1986, as part of the rejuvenation begun by Iurii Andropov; it was at this point that he became a Central Committee member, moving at the same time into the official trade-union organization.

Mishin was a Muscovite; born in 1943, he is the only fourth-generation leader we will be considering in this chapter. He reflected the urban background of his times, and was indeed the only elite member we have considered who was born in the capital city (Egorychev had been born in what is now the city's outskirts). His father was a building-worker who had been wounded in the war; his mother, also a worker, stayed at home when their children were young but then returned to full-time employment and remained there until she had reached a pensionable

<sup>55</sup> V. M. Mishin interview, June 1993, SEP.

<sup>56</sup> See Viktor Khorunzhii, 'O pervykh sekretariakh TsK Komsomola', *Molodoi kommunist*, no. 9, 1988, pp. 37–46. The exceptions were Chaplin, who died in 1938 apparently in captivity, and A. I. Mil'chakov, first secretary from 1928 to 1929, who was arrested in 1938 and spent 16 years in prison. The Komsomol was also notable as an organization that supplied KGB chairmen: Alexander Shelepin, Komsomol first secretary from 1952 to 1958, went on to head the KGB until 1961; Vladimir Semichastnyi, who succeeded him, had been first secretary of the Komsomol in the Ukraine and then, in 1958–9, succeeded Shelepin as first secretary at all-union level.

<sup>57</sup> V. I. Mironenko interview, April 1992, SEP.

age. Mishin, one of their three children, went to school in Moscow and then transferred to a technical college, leaving with a specialization in ferrous concrete. He took his studies further at the Kuibyshev Engineering-Construction Institute (MISI) in Moscow, where he subsequently joined the staff. Mishin had hoped to write a dissertation, but became involved in political work as a Komsomol activist and then as a trade-union as well as a Komsomol official at the institute at which he was employed. He had, in fact, decided to give up these duties, but in early 1968—and by now a party member—he was called back from a field trip and invited to become second secretary of a Komsomol district committee. At first he refused, and then a second time, but he was eventually persuaded to take up the position that had been offered to him. Mishin, thereafter, moved steadily up the Komsomol hierarchy, becoming first secretary in his local area and then a member of the full-time staff of the Moscow Komsomol, moving on between 1976 and 1978 to head the city's Komsomol committee, although he found it 'easier to speak without notes to a crowd of 5,000 than to compose a page-and-a-half document'.

Moving again into the national Komsomol leadership, Mishin became responsible for youth employment and in particular for the volunteers who were engaged in the construction of the Baikal–Amur mainline railway across Siberia, once flying its entire length in a helicopter. In December 1982, just days after the death of Brezhnev, he was called into party headquarters for an 'interesting talk' with Iurii Andropov and told he was to be nominated as the new Komsomol first secretary;<sup>58</sup> in the end he served under three successive party leaders, up to the accession of Gorbachev. Mishin found himself at odds with Egor Ligachev, the party secretary who had responsibility for youth, among other matters, and was invited to become ambassador to Uruguay shortly before the 27th Party Congress in 1986. If this was a decision, he replied, then as a party member he was bound to obey; but if it was simply a suggestion then his own views should count for something. His son, for instance, was in the fifth class at school and there was nobody to look after him; his wife would refuse to leave him behind, and how could an ambassador operate without a spouse? His objections, clearly, were persuasive, and in the event it was at this congress that Mishin joined the Central Committee, as a full member from the outset, and one of only sixteen fourth-generation members. Later in the year there was another 'suggestion' that Mishin should take the Soviet ambassadorship in Laos; but Ligachev suggested a position in the trade-union movement and (in his early forties) that was where he went, as a secretary of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions with responsibility in the first instance for sport and cultural activities of all kinds.

<sup>58</sup> His appointment was announced in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 7 Dec. 1982, p. 2 (with a picture). This account is based upon our Mishin interview (SEP); some additional details have been taken from Khorunzhii, 'O perykh sekretariiakh', 46. Mishin succeeded Boris Pastukhov, who became head of state publishing and (in 1986) ambassador to Denmark.



6.3 Viktor Mishin, pictured in 1983 addressing the fifth festival of youth of the USSR and Bulgaria (RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk)

Mishin, rather later, became an open opponent of Ligachev and his supporters, suggesting at a Central Committee plenum in early 1990 that Ligachev should ‘help the party’ by resigning or finding alternative employment.<sup>59</sup> Mishin was one of relatively few 1986 members who were re-elected in July 1990, when the number of fourth-generation members increased tenfold. But he was no friend of Alexander Iakovlev, widely seen as the architect of *perestroika*. Iakovlev was a man of 65 but his hair was still dark; Mishin was shocked to discover that he dyed it, and came to the conclusion he could not be trusted. Indeed, though no believer in ‘spy mania’, Mishin was ‘almost persuaded’ by stories in the popular press that Iakovlev had been recruited by foreign intelligence services, and that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had also been ‘bought’. Mishin himself began to go bald when he started to work in the Komsomol, and had to comb his hair carefully after he took his hat off—‘somehow it wasn’t right in a youth movement’. No sooner had he left

<sup>59</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral’nogo komiteta KPSS 11, 14, 16 marta 1990 g.* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990), 36–7.

the Komsomol—at the age of 43—than his hair stopped receding.<sup>60</sup> He was, indeed, of a generation that was young enough to make a political career in post-communist Russia, and in the December 1995 elections to the State Duma he was one of those who headed the list that was put forward by ‘My Fatherland’ on the basis of more gradual economic reform and a firm defence of Russian state interests.

These three individuals are among the very many we could have chosen to illustrate the tumultuous era between the death of Brezhnev and the collapse of the system. The completely new Central Committee members of July 1990, intended to be broadly representative of the party’s junior leadership, might also have been considered; among them there were, as we have seen, more women and young people, and more individuals from non-Slavic minorities and especially from Central Asia and the Caucasus. But Dobrik, Pervyshin, and Mishin were genuine members of the elite and represented aspects of its development through the 1986 and 1990 congresses. Dobrik and Pervyshin, in terms of their function and background, were not unlike regional secretaries and ministers from earlier post-war decades, although as third-generation leaders they at least reached maturity in more settled times, and were better educated than their predecessors. It is important to bear in mind, however, that unlike others of their generation Dobrik and Pervyshin were not held back from important posts. When Dobrik was elected in 1966 he was one of the relatively few who were drawn from the third generation. Even when Pervyshin was elected a decade later he was, at 44, relatively young; his and Dobrik’s generation still made up only a third of the membership. But Dobrik, when he left (with Baibakov) in the mass retirement of the ‘dead souls’ in April 1989, had already reached the age of 62. Pervyshin’s managerial skills kept him longer in an important post (if not in the Central Committee), but even he was on the edge of retirement. The age of the third generation had come and gone. The fourth-generation Mishin, for his part, was advancing into the elite well before the onset of full-blown *perestroika*. He did represent a possible replacement generation (he was born a year before the current Communist leader, Gennadii Ziuganov), but the system, and its elite, were already changing in fundamental ways. In the end it did not survive sufficiently long for the fourth generation to come into its political inheritance.

## The Central Committee and Perestroika

There were dramatic changes in the role of the Central Committee during the Gorbachev years, reflecting the leadership’s intention to ‘democratize’ its operation and more broadly based pressure for a greater degree of accountability in all aspects of party life. Some preliminary suggestions had already been made in the

<sup>60</sup> Mishin interview, SEP. His appointment as a member of the central trade-union secretariat was reported in *Trud*, 5 July 1986, p. 1.

party press in late 1985: in particular, that the compulsory turnover rules of the Khrushchev period should be reintroduced (the version that was approved at the 27th Congress in February 1986, in the event, spoke of no more than the 'systematic renewal' of party bodies together with 'continuity of leadership').<sup>61</sup> A more far-reaching reform agenda began to develop during the following year, in advance of a party conference that was to reconsider the entire system of Soviet government and single-party dominance in particular. There were calls, for instance, for party officials to spend more time working 'with the masses', and for all party bodies from the Politburo downwards to present annual reports on their work.<sup>62</sup> It was suggested that there should be party congresses every two years and conferences between them, as in Lenin's time; and that the existing membership, recruited to a large extent during the Brezhnevite years of stagnation, should be re-registered and if possible reduced in number.<sup>63</sup> There was a good deal of concern about party finances, with calls for elected bodies at all levels to present proper accounts (they knew more about the income and expenditure of the British royal family, complained one speaker at the 1988 Party Conference, than they did about the financial affairs of their own party).<sup>64</sup> And there was widespread agreement that members should themselves be recruited on the basis of personal qualities rather than their social origin.<sup>65</sup>

The most widely supported proposals were that there should be a choice of candidate at all elections to party office, and that positions of this kind should be held for a limited number of terms. Under the existing system of recommendations from above, wrote one contributor to the debate, party posts were filled not by election but by appointment, and often for life. Membership of the Central Committee, in particular, had become 'attached to high-ranking official positions', leaving it a passive body that was 'ready to carry out any instructions of the "chief"'.<sup>66</sup> There should, other contributors suggested, be a maximum period of continuous membership of the Central Committee and of its apparatus, with at least a third of its members standing down at each election.<sup>67</sup> Party posts should be filled by secret ballot from a larger number of candidates than seats available, and it should be possible to make changes ahead of time in party committees that were working ineffectively.<sup>68</sup> Changes were also suggested in the way in which the

<sup>61</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 17, 1985, p. 79, and no. 18, p. 62 (where the Central Committee is specifically identified). For the discussion see Stephen White, *Soviet Communism: Programme and Rules* (London: Routledge, 1989), 14–17.

<sup>62</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 25, 1988, p. 2; *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 6, 1988, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 6, 1988, p. 44; *Pravda*, 2 May 1988, pp. 1, 3.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. *Kommunist*, no. 3, 1988, p. 36; XIX *Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia*, i. 337.

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. *Kommunist*, no. 4, 1988, p. 85.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, 1988, p. 37; *Pravda*, 9 Mar. 1988, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 6, 1988, p. 44; *Pravda*, 6 Apr. 1988, p. 2. Other calls for a limit of two terms in the same elected party position and for the restoration of the compulsory turnover rules of the Khrushchev period were made in *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 10, 1988, p. 38 and in *Kommunist*, no. 5, 1988, p. 41.

<sup>68</sup> *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 11, 1988, pp. 38–9.

general secretary was elected, with either a nationwide ballot or a 'kind of party referendum' deciding the matter.<sup>69</sup> There might even be age limits, such as 65 for Politburo and Secretariat members.<sup>70</sup> And there should be changes to the party's own bureaucracy: it should be smaller, and should less obviously parallel the ministerial hierarchy.<sup>71</sup>

There were further proposals for democratizing changes in the functioning of the party's leading bodies, including the Central Committee. It was argued, for instance, that the Central Committee should play a more active role in the party's affairs, with at least some members working together with the Politburo and Secretariat in the preparation of plenary meetings, and with the term 'Central Committee resolution' reserved for decisions that had been discussed by the entire membership and not simply by the full-time apparatus.<sup>72</sup> Changes were suggested in the way in which the Central Committee was elected, with the vote being taken at an open session of the party congress and successful candidates identified at least by their position and place of work.<sup>73</sup> And much more should be known about how the Central Committee operated, and about what was said at its plenary meetings.<sup>74</sup> Surveys of party members made clear that there was substantial support for many of these proposals: a majority of Moscow members, for instance, favoured the reintroduction of compulsory turnover in the party's leading bodies and the election of all-party committees by secret and competitive ballot, and there was strong support for the production of a special bulletin with information on Central Committee meetings.<sup>75</sup>

The party's response to the debate became apparent on 27 May 1988 when ten 'Theses', approved by the Central Committee at a plenum four days earlier, were published in the central press. *Perestroika*, argued the first thesis, had already created a 'new ideological-political situation'; what was needed now was a 'continuously operating mechanism for the comparison of opinions, criticism, and self-criticism within the party and society' as a means of promoting a 'constructive political dialogue'. The role of the party more particularly was considered in the fifth thesis. It made clear that there would have to be a whole series of changes in party organization, including freedom of discussion, collegiality, and inner-party democracy. There would also have to be a series of related changes in the party's own structures, including the re-registration of existing members and the election

<sup>69</sup> *Sovetskaiia kul'tura*, 30 Apr. 1988, p. 5; *Soviet Weekly*, 18 June 1988, p. 10. There were similar proposals in *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 15, 1988, p. 8 (which called for 'direct elections' up to the general-secretaryship level) and in *Sovetskaiia Rossiia*, 14 June 1988, p. 1 (which called for party-wide election of the general secretary after a congress or Central Committee plenum had suggested candidates).

<sup>70</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 16, 1988, p. 2 (the reference was specifically to the 'leading echelons' of the party structure). Surveys of party members found strong support for such limits: *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 6, 1988, pp. 33–41.

<sup>71</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 4, 1988, pp. 86–7; *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 8, 1988, p. 49, and no. 9, p. 48.

<sup>72</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 9, 1988, p. 35.

<sup>73</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 20, 1988, p. 13 (Iu. Burtin).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 12, 1988, p. 8 and no. 17, 1988, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 6, 1988, pp. 33–41; similarly *Kommunist*, no. 9, 1988, pp. 31–5.

of party committees at all levels by secret and competitive ballot for a limited period. The Central Committee, as the Theses pointed out, had a 'particular responsibility' in this connection. It should become more collegial in its work, so that policy choices were made with the participation of all its members and on the basis of a 'broad discussion'. There should also be a consideration of the ways in which Central Committee members could take part in its work between formal sessions, and a 'partial renewal' of its membership between congresses.<sup>76</sup>

Most of these themes found a place in Gorbachev's speech to the Party Conference in June 1988, and in the conference resolutions. There had been 'definite deformations in the party itself', Gorbachev told the delegates. Democratic centralism had degenerated into bureaucratic centralism. The rank and file had lost control of party policy and of the leaderships that spoke in their name. Leading officials, in their turn, had begun to feel they were beyond the reach of criticism, which had sometimes led to the abuse of the powers with which they had been entrusted. The party, Gorbachev insisted, must remodel its activity and resume the role of political vanguard that was its proper responsibility. More specifically, he recommended the review of the entire membership that had been proposed in the Theses, and the ending of any 'quotas or bureaucratic approaches' in the matter of party membership. The prestige of elected bodies must also be restored, and above all of the Central Committee, which occupied a 'special position in the party and society'. The Central Committee, he argued, was already being 'revived' and its plenary meetings were very different, but new ways must be found of involving its members in policy formation on a continuing basis, including participation in the work of the Politburo itself. More candidates should be nominated than seats available in all party elections, right up to Central Committee level, and the election of officials should then be conducted on the basis of a secret and competitive ballot for a limited number of terms.<sup>77</sup>

There was support for most of these proposals during the Conference, and for others that went considerably further. It was widely agreed, for instance, that full reports should be published of Central Committee meetings, and that its members should report regularly to their own branches.<sup>78</sup> Anatolii Mel'nikov, a shop-floor worker at the Volga Auto Works, wanted to 'know in greater detail the position of each member of the Central Committee', so that party elections could reflect majority opinion.<sup>79</sup> Vladimir Kalashnikov, the Volgograd first secretary, was more concerned to ensure that members of the Central Committee had a part to play in the preparation of documents for its plenary meetings, and for the Politburo; as Boris Yeltsin pointed out, the Theses that had been presented to the

<sup>76</sup> *Tezisy Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS k XIX Vsesoiuznoi partiinoi konferentsii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988), 4–6, 14–17.

<sup>77</sup> *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia*, i. 76–83.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 324, 258.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 10.

Conference itself had been prepared without the involvement of the great majority of the Central Committee's own members.<sup>80</sup> The conference, in its concluding resolutions, agreed with Gorbachev that a 'profound democratization' of party life was necessary in these circumstances. Membership, for a start, should be determined by political criteria rather than centrally determined quotas; decisions should be shared, and meetings should be more open and constructive. The Central Committee itself should be allowed a more active role in the work of the leadership, hearing reports from the Politburo on a regular basis and establishing its own commissions on foreign and domestic policy. And—a matter of 'prime importance'—all posts up to CC level should be filled by secret and competitive ballot for a maximum of two five-year terms.<sup>81</sup>

These reforms, like their counterparts in the state system, gradually began to be implemented over the months that followed. Competitive elections to party office had indeed begun to take place as early as February 1987, when a local party secretary in the Kemerovo region had been chosen by secret ballot from two competing candidates.<sup>82</sup> Further changes followed in September 1988, when the Central Committee approved six new commissions dealing respectively with party affairs, ideology, social and economic policy, agriculture, international affairs, and law reform; their full membership was approved in November. Each was chaired by a senior member of the leadership, and taken as a whole they were intended to involve the CC membership 'on a regular basis in active work on the main directions of the [party's] domestic and foreign policy'.<sup>83</sup> The Central Committee apparatus was simplified and reduced in size,<sup>84</sup> and a new Central Committee journal, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, began to appear in 1989. The party's finances were discussed in its first issue (the central apparatus, it emerged, accounted for no more than 3 per cent of total expenditure); it also published the full records of a number of the Central Committee's own meetings as well as an authorized version of Khrushchev's secret speech, the real date of Stalin's birthday, and a series of photographs, including some that showed the advances of Lenin's terminal illness.<sup>85</sup>

Matters were taken still further at a three-day plenum in February 1990, at which the Central Committee accepted Gorbachev's proposal that the party should abandon its guaranteed leading role (in practice, that it should propose the modification of Article 6 of the Constitution). Gorbachev was still concerned that the CPSU should play a 'consolidating' role in Soviet political life, indeed that it should remain the 'political leader' of the society as a whole. Any position of this kind, however, should be won by a competitive struggle for popular support, not guaranteed in advance by the Constitution. The party itself required further

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., i. 136, and ii. 57.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., ii. 141–4.

<sup>82</sup> *Pravda*, 10 Feb. 1987, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vol. 29 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 84, 89–97.

<sup>84</sup> See *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 1, 1989, pp. 81–6 (Gorbachev memorandum of 8 Sept. 1988).

<sup>85</sup> For the budget see *ibid.* 135–7, and also *Pravda*, 10 Feb. 1989, p. 3.



reform, with greater rights for members and local branches. It also needed a smaller Central Committee that would be in more or less continuous session and that would be free of the 'mainly *ex officio* basis' on which the Central Committee had been constituted in the past.<sup>86</sup> The proposals that were agreed at the plenum included the idea of 'platforms' within the party, as in the early Civil War years, and a new and more decentralized structure for the party's leading bodies, with a new Politburo, or perhaps a Presidium of the Central Committee to take charge of 'political and organizational questions' between its plenary sessions. Some members of the Central Committee, it was agreed in addition, should be allowed to work on a full-time basis in the party apparatus and in CC commissions, paid out of party funds.<sup>87</sup>

These proposals, in turn, were consolidated in the summer of 1990 when the 28th Congress adopted an entirely new set of party rules and a 'Programmatic Declaration' that was to guide its strategy until a new party programme had been approved. 'Platforms', if not organized factions, were explicitly approved; minority rights were strengthened; elections for all party officers were to be direct, competitive, and secret; and 'horizontal' links between members and branches at the same level were specifically encouraged (they had previously been regarded as incompatible with democratic centralism). Democratic centralism itself, in the form it had taken in the past, was 'decisively rejected'.<sup>88</sup> There was little support, in the end, for a Central Committee Presidium or for the proposal that the party should have a chairman and vice-chairmen; but several other changes were approved, including the idea of referendums among the membership on 'urgent questions of public and party life', and the ending of candidate or non-voting membership of the Central Committee. All of this was designed to provide the basis, as Gorbachev saw it, of an 'updated CPSU', a tolerant and self-managing party that would combine a parliamentary with its traditional vanguard role.<sup>89</sup>

The new rules made explicit provision for the permanent commissions, which were to be elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee and which would consist of CC members and a smaller number of 'advisors'. The system was considered more extensively following the party congress, at the October 1990 plenum. As Oleg Shenin of the Secretariat explained, there would in future be eleven commissions: ideological; socio-political (a new one, which would consider the political situation and relations with other parties and movements); socio-

<sup>86</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 5-7 fevralia 1990 g., 8-10, 22-4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 378-81.

<sup>88</sup> *Materialy XVIII s"ezda*, 95-7.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 38-9; the party rules as adopted are in *ibid.* 108-24. There was a further discussion of the role of the Central Committee in the commission on 'party renewal' that met under the auspices of the Congress. The records are held in the Rossiiskii tsentr khraneniia i izucheniia dokumentov noveishei istorii (RTSKhIDNI), Moscow, *fond* 646, *opis'* 1, *ed. khr.* 16. For a discussion see Stephen White, 'The Failure of CPSU Democratization', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 75: 4 (Oct. 1997), 681-97.

economic; agricultural; nationalities; international; women and the family; and primary party organizations (the last four were also innovations). To fulfil the decisions of the Party Congress in July, three further commissions were formed: on science, education and culture, youth, and military matters. There would also be counsellors (*sovetniki*), who would be proposed by the commissions themselves at a later stage; and each commission would have its own staff (the commission on women and the family, for instance, had eleven full-time assistants).<sup>90</sup>

Did these elaborate efforts to extend the influence of ordinary party members, and of the Central Committee on their behalf, bring about significant changes in practice? It was certainly clear that the CC had become a more active and participatory institution than it had been at almost any time since the establishment of party rule (Table 6.5). It met more often, and for longer, than it had done since the 1950s, and adopted more resolutions at its meetings than it had done at any time since the 1920s; more resolutions were adopted in the name of the Central Committee than ever before. The Central Committee was itself a larger body in the late 1980s, and participation in its sessions was extended in a manner reminiscent of Khrushchev to first secretaries from the republics and regions, party deputies in the Soviet parliament, scholars, managers, and journalists, and sometimes groups of workers. The March 1989 plenum on agricultural policy, for instance, included party secretaries, kolkhoz chairmen, and commercial farmers;<sup>91</sup> the February 1990 plenum, at which it was agreed to abandon the party's political monopoly, had about 800 participants.<sup>92</sup> Altogether, between March 1986 and the party congress in July 1990 there were more than 3,500 participants in plenary meetings and 529 who were able to address the membership directly.<sup>93</sup>

Several plenums, as Gorbachev suggested, had been of 'landmark significance'.<sup>94</sup> The January 1987 plenum had been postponed three times, and met after the latest available date under the party's rules; it might not have met at all if Gorbachev had not threatened to resign.<sup>95</sup> It was this plenum that approved the programme of 'democratization'; the June 1987 plenum approved an economic reform strategy, and called the first party conference in nearly fifty years. The October 1987 plenum heard an appreciation of seventy years of Soviet socialism, and a sensational attack upon the results of that period of rule by Boris Yeltsin. The May 1988 plenum approved the Theses that were put to the party conference in the summer; and in November 1988 a plenum approved the reforms that led directly to the country's first-ever competitive elections. In September 1989 there

<sup>90</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS 8–9 oktiabria 1990 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), 41–4.

<sup>91</sup> *Pravda*, 16 Mar. 1989, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak*, 348.

<sup>93</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 9, 1990, p. 17.

<sup>94</sup> *XXVIII s"ezd*, i. 100.

<sup>95</sup> Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, iv. 428. Some of the tensions at this plenum were reported by Mikhail Ul'ianov in *Kommunist*, no. 5, 1987, pp. 51–7.

**Table 6.5.** CC activity, 1980–1990

	Number of plenums	Days of meeting	Number of speakers	Resolutions adopted at plenums	Other CC resolutions
1980–4 average	3	3	11	5	15
1985	4	4	27	2	6
1986	3	3	19*	3	14
1987	3	5	96	6	14
1988	5	6	81	10	27
1989	8	11	225	11	38
1990	6	13	204	9	28

Note: \*=incomplete data. Derived from *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika*, vyp. 21–30 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981–90); *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1–12 (1990); and press reports.

was an attempt to define a party policy on the national question; another plenum in December 1989 addressed the crisis that had arisen as a result of the decision by Lithuanian communists to take their party organization outside the CPSU. The February 1990 plenum was perhaps the most important of all: meeting in the face of huge public demonstrations, it agreed to reformulate Article 6 of the Constitution and in effect to legalize multi-party politics. The March 1990 plenum approved the establishment of a Soviet presidency; and in July 1991, at its last plenary meeting, the Central Committee completed the party's reluctant transition from communist orthodoxy to a position close to Western social democracy with the adoption of a draft, but very different, Party Programme.

Meetings of the Central Committee were certainly becoming more open, with alternative opinions and divided votes; and some were prepared to argue that they were becoming more substantive as well. Ligachev, for instance, told the Constitutional Court in 1992 that there had been significant changes in the way that business was conducted, particularly after 1988 and the formation of Central Committee commissions. Many party documents had been drafted in the commissions and then submitted to a full plenum; members of the commissions also took part in meetings of the Politburo and Secretariat. And there was a widening practice of more general consultation: when the educational system was being considered in February 1988, for instance, advice was sought from specialists, from Soviet embassies abroad, and from a series of local meetings.<sup>96</sup> Moscow University rector Anatolii Logunov, a Central Committee member up to 1990, remembered earlier plenums as 'heavily programmed', with speakers reporting a succession of 'positive results'. Now they were more lively, 'even interesting'; he could say what he wanted, at least on the development of science, and no one

<sup>96</sup> *Pravda*, 17 Oct. 1992, p. 4.

either read his speech beforehand or refused him permission to deliver it.<sup>97</sup> Mikhail Nenashev, a newspaper editor who had become head of state publishing, recalled that they 'had the chance to express all [their] doubts and anxieties' at Central Committee plenums; he 'spoke often and said much that was unwelcome to the party leadership'.<sup>98</sup> Ligachev himself, seventeen years a first secretary in Tomsk, had his first opportunity to address a plenary session of any kind during these years.<sup>99</sup>

The Central Committee, under Gorbachev, had once again become central to the life of the party, as it had been in the 1920s; but it had done so at a time when the party's own position was being challenged and then repudiated. Its membership had become much more representative of wider society, of its gender and nationality balance and of its generations and classes. Party members had won the right to choose their own officials in a secret and competitive ballot; and congress delegates had won the right to vote, more freely than in the past, on the composition of the Central Committee that would guide the party until the next congress. The Central Committee itself had begun to meet more frequently; it was hearing more speeches and making more decisions than had been the case since Khrushchev, if not before. But just as society was divided by the experience of *perestroika*, so too was the party; and just as the party was divided, so too were congress delegates and the Central Committee itself. Most delegates in 1990, for instance, favoured a 'vanguard' party (67 per cent); but a substantial minority (19 per cent) wanted a party of the conventional parliamentary kind. And while most party delegates were in favour of a market economy, the majority (58 per cent) thought it should be introduced without any reduction in living standards.<sup>100</sup> The Central Committee was no longer a body that willingly legitimated the 'general line' of an all-knowing leadership; but neither had it become a body through which a diversifying party could express its views and develop a programme of government that would command the confidence of its own members and of the wider society.

## The Last Days of the Central Committee

The divisions that had emerged in the late 1980s widened and deepened in the early 1990s, and were themselves located within a party that was experiencing a many-sided crisis.<sup>101</sup> One sign of this was a sudden fall in party membership after

<sup>97</sup> A. A. Logunov interview, March 1992, SEP.

<sup>98</sup> Mikhail Nenashev, *Zalozhnik vremeni. Zametki, razmysleniia, svidetel'stva* (Moscow: Progress/Kul'tura, 1993), 359–60.

<sup>99</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 3, 1991, p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1990, no. 8, pp. 133–5.

<sup>101</sup> For a more general discussion see e.g. E. A. Rees (ed.), *The Soviet Communist Party in Disarray* (London: Macmillan, 1992); James R. Millar (ed.), *Cracks in the Monolith: Party Power in the Brezhnev Era* (Armonk NY: Sharpe, 1992); Graeme Gill, *The Collapse of Single Party Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ronald J. Hill, 'The CPSU: Decline and Collapse', *Irish Slavonic Studies*, 12 (1991), 97–120; and Stephen White, 'Rethinking the CPSU', *Soviet Studies*, 43: 3 (1991), 405–28.

decades of steady growth. A few members resigned in 1988, the first to do so since the Civil War, although total numbers were still increasing; there was a slight fall of just over 1 per cent in 1989; and then there was a collapse between the start of 1990 and the summer of 1991, with the resignation or departure of a quarter of the entire membership.<sup>102</sup> Elected deputies were leaving the party at the same time—more than 300 members of the USSR or Russian parliaments for a start<sup>103</sup>—and there was the first recorded case of the resignation of a member of the Central Committee itself, the playwright Alexander Gel'man, who was found to have 'lost touch' with the party at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in January 1991.<sup>104</sup> In April 1991 the economist Stanislav Shatalin was 'deemed to have left the Central Committee' on ceasing to be a party member (his views, it had been agreed in January, were 'incompatible with membership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, let alone membership of its Central Committee');<sup>105</sup> later still Ivan Silaev resigned from the Central Committee on becoming Russian prime minister; Eduard Shevardnadze resigned on leaving the party altogether; and the Mordovian prime minister Anatolii Berezin left after he had been expelled—again, a decision that had no post-war precedent.<sup>106</sup>

Another symptom of a deepening crisis was a widening shortfall in party income. By October 1990 more than a million members were behind with their dues, and a regime of 'severe economy' had to be instituted; by the summer of 1991 expenditure was running at almost twice the level of party income, and officials were calling upon savings and other reserves.<sup>107</sup> There were revolts against local party leaderships, and open divisions among the membership: several

<sup>102</sup> Onikov, *KPSS*, 148; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 2, 1989, p. 138, and no. 4, 1990, p. 113, for the 1989 and 1990 totals; and *Pravda*, 26 July 1991, p. 2. Several studies examined the reasons for this unprecedented outflow: see *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, no. 6, 1990, pp. 103–4; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 3, 1990, pp. 124–5, and no. 4, 1991, pp. 66–68. The typical resigner, according to contemporary surveys, was a man aged between 30 and 50, an industrial worker with secondary education, who had been a party member for more than ten years (*Tsentral'noi sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniia Akademii obshchestvennykh nauk pri TsK KPSS, Politicheskaiia sotsiologiia: informatsionnyi biulleten'*, no. 3, 1991, pp. 14–15).

<sup>103</sup> *Pravda*, 29 Apr. 1991, p. 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Feb. 1991, p. 1; Gel'man announced his resignation from the party and from the Central Committee in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 37, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> *Materialy ob'edinnogo Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta i Tsentral'noi kontrol'noi komissii KPSS, 24–25 aprelia 1991 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 6. Shatalin had written an open letter to Gorbachev in which he had declared himself a 'social democrat' and attributed their difficulties to a 'totalitarian communist ideology' (*Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 22 Jan. 1991, p. 2; he had already sought to 'justify himself before the people' in *ibid.*, 16 Jan. 1991, p. 2). For the Central Committee's judgement see *Materialy ob'edinnogo Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta i Tsentral'noi Kontrol'noi Komissii KPSS, 31 ianvaria 1991 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 5.

<sup>106</sup> *Pravda*, 7 July 1991, p. 1. Shevardnadze's resignation from the party was reported in *ibid.*, 5 July 1991, p. 2. On Berezin, who had first been elected to the Central Committee in 1976, see N. P. Medvedev, *'Novye' na staroi ploschchadi* (Moscow: Respublika, 1997), 78; the Central Control Commission's decision to expel him was reported in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 5, 1991, pp. 41–2, and in *Pravda*, 20 Mar. 1991, p. 4.

<sup>107</sup> *Pravda*, 12 Oct. 1990, p. 3, and (for 'severe economy') *ibid.*, 12 Mar. 1990, p. 3; excessive levels of expenditure were reported in *ibid.*, 29 July 1991, p. 2.

distinct groupings were formed in advance of the 28th Congress in 1990, and by the summer of 1991 the chairman of the Party Control Commission identified at least ten organized tendencies within the ranks of what had originally been a party ostensibly based on 'monolithic unity'.<sup>108</sup> Three republican party organizations—the Lithuanian, Georgian, and Moldavian—seceded entirely, while the other Baltic party organizations split into pro- and anti-Moscow sections (there was some surprise when both the 'loyal' and the 'independent' Estonian party first secretaries took their place in the Politburo<sup>109</sup>). Fewer people were calling each other 'comrade', fewer were writing to the Central Committee with their concerns, and within the central party apparatus itself staff were leaving—some of them with knives and teaspoons from the Central Committee dining-room in their pockets—and vacancies were hard to fill.<sup>110</sup>

Why had members been leaving, why was morale so low, and why had unity been so difficult to sustain? It was, at least in part, a result of the party's failure to democratize its own activities. The 28th Congress, certainly, had attempted to strengthen the rights of ordinary members by allowing the formation of 'platforms' and protecting minority rights (see above, pp. 224–5); but few members were satisfied by its decisions, 70 per cent thought it had made little difference to the work of party organizations, and as many as 80 per cent no longer thought the party was capable of leading the country out of its crisis.<sup>111</sup> The new rules that had been adopted by the congress, in particular, made little difference: only 18 per cent of the party members who were asked in late 1990 thought the congress had made a positive contribution to the 'general state of affairs' within the party, and even fewer thought it had strengthened the party's influence in the workplace;<sup>112</sup> few members thought there had been a redistribution of power in their favour in spite of a declared intention to hand party affairs back to the rank and file, and a clear majority thought their opinions on matters of the day were 'simply ignored'.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 29 July 1991, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Boldin, *Krushenie p'edestala*, 421–2.

<sup>110</sup> *Pravda*, 12 June 1990, p. 3; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 157 (fewer than half as many letters reached the Central Committee in 1989 as in 1988); and Nenashev, *Zalozhnik vremeni*, 120. For the loss of knives and teaspoons—food had disappeared much earlier—see Valerii Legostaev, *Tekhnologiya izmeny* (Moscow: Paleia, 1993), 199.

<sup>111</sup> *Politicheskaia sotsiologiya*, no. 3, 1991, p. 10 (by early 1991 fewer than half of the party's members associated themselves with the Congress's decisions); E. N. Makhov to the Central Control Commission, *Pravda*, 6 Mar. 1991, p. 4 ('70 per cent'); and V. Z. Boikov *et al.*, *Obshchestvennoe soznanie i perestroika* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 244 (reporting a June 1990 survey). Among delegates to the Congress 13% were satisfied by its decisions but 27% were dissatisfied and the remaining 60% were 'not fully satisfied' (*Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, 11 (1990), 103); among members of the public 10% were satisfied, 51% were not completely satisfied and 37% were entirely dissatisfied (*Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 142).

<sup>112</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 1, 1991, p. 59 (based on a survey of 1898 party members in October and November 1990).

<sup>113</sup> See respectively *Politicheskaia sotsiologiya*, no. 3, 1991, p. 7, and *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, no. 24, 1989, p. 23 (59% in a Moscow Party School survey).

Others, writing in the party press, complained that branches were 'powerless', with 'practically no influence on the activity of higher party bodies including the Central Committee', and that the influence of ordinary members was 'close to zero'.<sup>114</sup> The term 'discussion' appeared in the party rules, a Kazakh delegate told the Central Committee in 1990, but it had never been put into practice; and for the membership as a whole, as the party's final congress convened in the summer of that year, it was the democratization of the party itself that was their first priority.<sup>115</sup>

There were several means of achieving this, according to the discussion on 'party renewal' that took place in July 1990—with over 1,200 participants, it was by far the largest of the sections into which the 28th Congress divided for more detailed consideration of the matters that were on its agenda.<sup>116</sup> A central concern, throughout the discussion, was to reassert the 'power of the party masses' and to overcome a 'growing gulf' between the membership at large and the leadership that spoke in their name. For a start, suggested the first secretary of the Khakass regional party committee, branches should themselves decide on admission to party membership;<sup>117</sup> and they should control their own budgets, retaining not less than half of the income they collected from members.<sup>118</sup> Party branches, similarly, should be able to make their own decisions, unless they had agreed to transfer responsibilities elsewhere.<sup>119</sup> They should elect their delegates directly to the party congress;<sup>120</sup> they should have the right to propose their own resolutions to the congress, and to call party referendums if there was sufficient support; and they should be able to refuse to implement party directives if two-thirds of their members decided accordingly<sup>121</sup>—a clear departure from democratic centralism. Branches 'were the party', not just its 'foundation', insisted the department head of a research institute in Moscow. When were they going to establish a 'democratic mechanism' through which they could hold the leadership properly to account, ending the 'pyramid of power' that had developed in its place?<sup>122</sup>

Many of the delegates to the 28th Congress had particular suggestions about the role of the Central Committee in this connection. It should, they thought, be a 'full-time organization of up to 200', rather like the new-style Supreme Soviet.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>114</sup> *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 5, 1990, p. 22; and for 'close to zero', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 3, 1990, p. 33.

<sup>115</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS, 5–7 fevralia 1990 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), 184; *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 25, 1990, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 646, opis' 1, ed. kbr.* 16. A fuller account of this discussion appears in Stephen White, 'The Failure of CPSU Democratization', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 75: 4 (Oct. 1997), 1–17.

<sup>117</sup> RTsKhIDNI, *fond 646, opis' 1, ed. kbr.* 16, pp. 19 ('growing gulf') and 14.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* 64.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 29, 36.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* 77–8.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* 16 (suggestions of this kind had been contained in the Central Committee's proposals to the 18th Party Conference: see pp. 221–2).

It should be elected by the membership as a whole, in a national and competitive ballot.<sup>124</sup> Its decisions should be discussed beforehand in party branches and adopted only if a majority of members voted in favour; and its members should report back to their own branches every year.<sup>125</sup> Another suggestion was that half the members of the Central Committee should be scholars—political scientists, economists, lawyers, and others—making it the ‘real intellectual centre of the party’, not a gathering of senior officials.<sup>126</sup> A Kiev party secretary suggested that each Central Committee member should be assisted by a paid consultant, reducing staffing levels at the local level but creating a more professional organization at the centre, with commissions that operated on a continuing basis and which might allow them to dispense entirely with a Politburo.<sup>127</sup> It was also suggested that there should be a ‘council of equals’ in place of the party’s leading executive body, eliminating the need for a General Secretary and reviving the ‘genuine collective leadership’ that was thought to have existed in Lenin’s time; and that the congress itself should meet more often, providing for the ‘fullest possible discussion’ of the whole range of public policy as well as of party affairs.<sup>128</sup>

The same themes were echoed in the letters of ordinary members that reached party headquarters over the year or so that followed the Congress. There was a real concern, throughout these communications, that party leaders had escaped the democratic control of the mass membership, and of bodies like the Central Committee that they had helped to elect. Why, for instance, were there no proceedings against previous party leaders whose policies had so clearly failed, or who had abused their position? Why were party leaders so rarely interviewed in the mass media, and why did they make so few speeches before the ordinary membership? Why had they failed to inform members of the party’s policies for dealing with the economic crisis, and why had the activities of the general secretary and of the Central Committee as a whole had so little effect?<sup>129</sup> Why, beyond this, were party bodies, including the Central Committee, housed in ‘luxuriously appointed and equipped premises’ with a ‘substantial pool of high-class automobiles’, and why did officials have an income up to three times higher than that of the members they represented?<sup>130</sup> Why were party and state leaders, ‘forgetting about honour, conscience, and the elementary norms of decency’, building themselves ‘dacha palaces’ at public expense while half a million army families waited for rehousing? ‘You won’t see the needs of the people from the windows of an official

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 61, 75.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 16 (majority of members), 51 (reporting back).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 51 (paid consultants), 69 (full-time commissions).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. 24, 63 (‘council of equals’); and 61 (similarly on pp. 13 and 63, abolition of the Politburo).

<sup>129</sup> TsKhSD, *fond 89, perechen’* 11, doc. 183. For a fuller discussion of these communications see Stephen White, ‘Communists and Their Party in the Late Soviet Period’, *Slavonic and East European Review*, 72: 4 (Oct. 1994), 644–63.

<sup>130</sup> TsKhSD, *fond 89, perechen’* 11, doc. 184.



car' as the party secretary of a regiment in Belorussia remarked, 'especially with its winter heating on.'<sup>131</sup>

Concerns of this kind were widely reflected in the press and in surveys of membership opinion. The Central Control Commission spoke of an 'information famine' in the party in the spring of 1991; Central Committee officials themselves acknowledged a lack of 'intercommunication and interaction' at 'all levels of the party structure'.<sup>132</sup> Members, for their part, felt 'remote' from the process of party decision-making and complained that the slogans on party democracy that had been adopted at the 28th Congress had 'not been backed up by a practical mechanism for the expression of the views of party members', leaving them with 'only a single right—to pay dues'; the 'main contradiction', as they saw it, was between an 'authoritarian and bureaucratic party apparatus' and a rank and file that was 'democratic in its aspirations, influenced by the changes that had taken place since April 1985'.<sup>133</sup> The proposals that came forward through the resolutions and letters of members and branches suggested several ways in which this damaging gulf could be eliminated, including the election of party secretaries by ordinary members and better representation of the membership on elected bodies from the district level up to the Central Committee.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps, a Central Committee member suggested, there should be a party television channel, so that people could know more about the practical activity of the leading party bodies and would 'no longer have to ask "what are you doing in your commissions?"' There were also calls for the expulsion of the corrupt and discredited from party ranks, and for a more open and equitable allocation of party resources (the main reason members were reluctant to pay their dues, it was reported, was because they were being used to support the full-time apparatus).<sup>135</sup>

There was particularly strong support, among these proposals, for the direct election of party officials at all levels by ordinary members, for greater rights for party branches, and for the subordination of higher levels of the party to the membership as a whole.<sup>136</sup> As things now stood, a Kursk party secretary pointed out, ordinary branches, supposedly the foundation of the party, were in a 'powerless

<sup>131</sup> TsKhSD, *fond 89, perechen'* 8, doc. 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Pravda*, 6 Mar. 1991, p. 4; TsKhSD, *fond 89, perechen'* 11, doc. 70.

<sup>133</sup> The views of a 'majority' in a survey of 1,600 members in January–February 1991, reported in *Pravda*, 26 Feb. 1991, p. 3. For 'paying dues', *XXVIII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, 2–13 iuliia 1990 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991), i. 533 (G. A. Pershin); and for the 'main contradiction', *Kommunist*, no. 13, 1991, p. 17, based upon a Moscow survey of 1,000 party members.

<sup>134</sup> *Politicheskaiia sotsiologiia*, no. 3, 1991, p. 76 (election of branch secretaries); and *Partiinaia zbizn'*, no. 10, 1990, p. 30 (similar sentiments were expressed by the Kemerovo first secretary, A. G. Mel'nikov, at the December 1989 plenum: *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 61).

<sup>135</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 12, 1990, p. 66 (CC member); and *Politicheskaiia sotsiologiia*, no. 3, 1991, p. 76.

<sup>136</sup> See e.g. Zh. T. Toshchenko *et al.* (eds.), *Politicheskoe soznanie i ego rol' v perestroike i obnovlenii obshchestvennykh otnoshenii. (Itogi povtornogo sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia)* (Moscow: AON pri TsK KPSS, 1990), which reported that 64.7% of members favoured the direct election of party leaders at

position and had practically no influence on the activity of higher bodies, including the Central Committee'.<sup>137</sup> Party committees, for their part, had 'gone too far away from the branches'.<sup>138</sup> A popular proposal, with the support of two-thirds of members, was the conduct of periodic referendums within party ranks, called either by the Central Committee or by a number of branches; another was that central party decisions should be discussed by branches and 'ratified' before they came into effect.<sup>139</sup> So far as the Central Committee more specifically was concerned, a proportion of its members should be freed from other duties and allowed to spend more time with ordinary members; and there should be an age limit, of between 60 and 65.<sup>140</sup> As ophthalmologist Sviatoslav Fedorov told the plenum that met in February 1990, a Central Committee with an average age of 60, simply for 'biological and physiological' reasons, could never hope to lead a programme of fundamental reform; there was no alternative to a 'far-reaching rejuvenation'.<sup>141</sup>

Central Committee members were themselves concerned about their lack of influence. The Central Committee had admittedly made no more than a limited contribution to the party's decision-making at earlier times; now, under a leadership that was committed to democratization, its members found it difficult to exercise the new role that had apparently been entrusted to them. The Latvian first secretary, Jan Vagris, complained about the continuing practice of preparing important party documents in 'Moscow offices'. The first he had seen of the party's draft programme, 'Towards a Humane, Democratic Socialism', he told the Central Committee in February 1990, was when he arrived to register; the Moscow party secretary, Iurii Prokof'ev, pointed out that it had not even been discussed in the commissions that were meant to give preliminary consideration to Central Committee business.<sup>142</sup> Politburo decisions were still being issued in the name of the Central Committee but without its active participation, the Kemerovo first secretary, Alexander Mel'nikov, complained to a plenum some months earlier, as in the case of a decision to replace the editor of *Pravda*, or to grant 500 million rubles from party funds to pensioners.<sup>143</sup> The decision to

all levels (p. 18). Other means of giving more influence to ordinary party members included direct and competitive elections at all levels of the organization, an end to the party's political monopoly, and the liquidation of privileges (*Kommunist*, no. 13, 1991, p. 20, based on a survey of party members in Moscow).

<sup>137</sup> *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 5, 1990, p. 22.

<sup>138</sup> *XXVIII s"ezd*, i. 405 (N. N. Sidorkin).

<sup>139</sup> On referendums see e.g. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1991, p. 64 (according to a survey 67% of members favoured such exercises: *Politicheskaiia sotsiologiia*, no. 3, 1991, p. 7), and similarly *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 17. On discussion and ratification see respectively *ibid.* and *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 5, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>140</sup> *Partiinaia zhizn'*, no. 1, 1990, p. 26; and on age limits, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 6, 1990, p. 30 (similarly *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 16, 1988, p. 2).

<sup>141</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 5-7 fevralia 1990 g., 229.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* 63 and 47 (Prokof'ev reiterated the point in *Pravda*, 27 Mar. 1990, p. 2).

<sup>143</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 58.

establish a Russian party bureau in 1989, added the first secretary from Sverdlovsk, had been decided without taking into account the views of even a single party organization in the republic; and most of them had learned from the daily papers that the chairman of the Party Control Commission, Boris Pugo, had resigned to become the minister of internal affairs.<sup>144</sup> It was only party officials that were surrendering a leading role, a rank-and-file delegate told the Central Committee at its meeting in February 1990; ordinary members of the party had never enjoyed that kind of influence in the first place.<sup>145</sup>

Central Committee members, similarly, found it difficult to gain a hearing at its meetings—there were either ‘full-time orators, or ones that had been lined up in advance’.<sup>146</sup> And it was difficult to consult with other members, a Moscow railway engineer, Iurii Lavrenov, told the plenum that met in January 1991. Documentation was made available on their arrival, when it could hardly be assimilated, and many resolutions, as a result, were adopted ‘practically blind’. There was nowhere Central Committee members could meet, and no way they could communicate with party headquarters without going through their city or regional committee. They were still working in the ‘old way’, complained Lavrenov; ‘we meet, raise our hands, and go home’.<sup>147</sup> Plenums, moreover, had very little effect. They were often inadequately prepared, and the results were very limited: there had been no results at all, members complained, from the plenum on educational policy in February 1988 or from the meeting that had considered economic reform in July 1987.<sup>148</sup> The plenum on agriculture of March 1989, equally, ‘had not justified the hopes that were invested in it’, in the view of the Sverdlovsk first secretary Vladimir Kadochnikov—it had been followed by a fall, not an increase, in the construction of social amenities in the countryside; and there had been no attempt to consult with members of the Central Committee before the 1989 elections, based on an election law that had itself been introduced without proper discussion.<sup>149</sup>

Indeed, there was some ambiguity about the rights that individual members of the Central Committee were supposed to enjoy. If was unclear, for instance, if they could call local party officials to account, as their rights were ‘not clearly defined in the party statutes’.<sup>150</sup> ‘At best,’ as a member of the Central Committee told a party meeting, ‘if people respect you, they somehow take account of your opinion.

<sup>144</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 5–7 fevralia 1990 g., 169; on Boris Pugo’s nomination, *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral’nogo komiteta KPSS*, 8–9 oktiabria 1990 g. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), 36.

<sup>145</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 5–7 fevralia 1990g., 59 (K. G. Fesenko).

<sup>146</sup> *Pravda*, 20 Nov. 1989, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 Feb. 1991, p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral’nogo komiteta KPSS 24–25 aprelia 1989 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 93 (the Komi first secretary, Vladimir Mel’nikov).

<sup>149</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 5–7 fevralia 1990 g., 168 and 237 (N. F. Tatarchuk on social construction in the countryside); *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 24–25 aprelia 1989 g., 64.

<sup>150</sup> *Pravda*, 25 Sept. 1989, p. 1.

No more than that.<sup>151</sup> The historian Roy Medvedev, elected to the Central Committee in 1990, found he was simply ignored for two months. When he visited party headquarters to find out what was happening he was told to write out a list of the responsibilities he would be assuming. The apparatus, he found, was 'used to commanding CC members who did not hold office in one of the structures of power'.<sup>152</sup> Galina Abel'guzina, a Bashkir chemical worker, complained that there was nothing to show from her eight months of membership; she received virtually no information about the way in which the Politburo or Secretariat had been operating, and the Central Committee's own commissions met hastily just before plenary meetings with no time for a proper discussion.<sup>153</sup> Speakers, others reported, were in any case selected in advance so that they would be sure to support the position the party leadership had already adopted.<sup>154</sup> Anatolii Buzgalin, elected to the Central Committee in 1990, found it impossible to express his views in the party newspaper, and had little assistance when it came to office space or photocopying ('the Central Committee has no paper'). Indeed, he found it impossible even to gain admission to party headquarters through the main entrance.<sup>155</sup>

The Central Committee, members agreed, should be more democratic in its own operation. Its meetings should be longer, for a start. The agenda should be prepared by its commissions, elected by the Central Committee itself. And given the limited time at their disposal, Politburo and Secretariat members should speak less often.<sup>156</sup> The commissions were certainly a step forward, agreed the Volgograd first secretary Vladimir Kalashnikov, but Central Committee members had often very little idea what they were considering. Take, for instance, the proposal that was being publicly advanced to re-establish a national republic for Soviet Germans, part of it in the Volgograd region. No one had bothered to consult him, and yet central party officials were speaking as if the decision had already been taken.<sup>157</sup> Central Committee documents, equally, should reach members in good time: they often arrived late, as much as two or three months after they had been adopted, and after they had been published in the newspapers. Members should be more adequately supported in their local area—they had to rely on the generosity of the regional party committee for transport, and on other sources for notepaper.<sup>158</sup> And there was a clear need for better information flows, perhaps by

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> S. A. Bogoliubov (ed.), *KPSS vne zakona?* (Moscow: Baikalskaia akademiia, 1992), 58.

<sup>153</sup> *Pravda*, 27 Apr. 1991, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> On the prior selection of speakers at a meeting of the agrarian commission in August 1990 see e.g. Viktor Danilov in T. P. Zaslavskaiia (ed.), *Kuda idet Rossiia? Alternativy obshchestvennogo razvitiia*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 1995), 327–8.

<sup>155</sup> A. V. Buzgalin, *Belaia vorona. Poslednii god zhizni TsK KPSS: vzgliad izvnutri* (Moscow: Tretii put', 1993), 85, 112, 110.

<sup>156</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 8–9 oktiabria 1990 g., 184–5.

<sup>157</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 24–25 apreliia 1989 g., 65–6.

<sup>158</sup> *Pravda*, 20 Nov. 1989, p. 2; the reference to two- or three-month delays was made by E. S. Khil'chenko in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 5, 1991, p. 61.

reviving the practice of sending Central Committee letters to local branches, and by a 'systematic briefing' of Central Committee members themselves (even a senior member of the leadership like Egor Ligachev had been unable to circulate two statements of his views, in the spring of 1990, to other members).<sup>159</sup>

Members of the Central Committee had equally little influence over the composition of their own membership, or of the party leadership they nominally elected. Indeed, they were often the last to know. In April 1989 they had no advance warning when nearly a hundred members resigned from the Central Committee to which they had been elected by a party congress just three years earlier.<sup>160</sup> And in September 1989 the candidates themselves heard of their nomination to the Secretariat on the eve of the plenary meeting at which their appointments were put forward for approval.<sup>161</sup> There was agitation when the names were read out, as not all of them were well known, and one of those proposed, the Tatar first secretary Gumer Usmanov, rose to explain that there must have been a misunderstanding as he had never been asked if he would wish to take the position in the Secretariat to which he had just been nominated (he resigned shortly afterwards).<sup>162</sup> In December 1989, the Kuibyshev regional first secretary complained, they were still hearing about forthcoming changes in the leadership at the plenum itself, and without any attempt to provide a choice of candidate. Why did the Central Committee urge democratization on others but set such a poor example itself?<sup>163</sup> In another case a year later Gorbachev had asked the Leningrad party leader, Boris Gidaspov, what he thought of a local professor, Vladimir Kalashnikov, as a possible member of the Secretariat. Gidaspov, in a 'brief conversation in the corridor', replied that Kalashnikov was an honest and educated person, 'but . . . "Fine, fine"', interrupted the General Secretary, and Kalashnikov was duly appointed.<sup>164</sup> This, in July 1991, was the last plenum the Central Committee ever held; despite a formal commitment to the enhanced powers of its members, there had at no stage in the years of *perestroika* been an election for the

<sup>159</sup> *Materialy ob "edinennomu Plenumu . . . 31 ianvaria 1991 g.*, 96 (letters) and 57 (briefings). Ligachev reported his experiences in E. K. Ligachev, *Zagadka Gorbacheva* (Novosibirsk: Interbuk, 1992), 96–9, 244–6; they were commented upon in Onikov, *KPSS*, 16–17.

<sup>160</sup> V. I. Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak . . . Iz dnevnika chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Sovet veteranov knigoizdaniya, 1995), 270, quoting Writers' Union chairman V. V. Karpov; no proceedings were published, but Karpov's speech was noted in *Pravda*, 23 May 1989, p. 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Materialy Plenuma . . . 5–7 fevralia 1990 g.*, 169.

<sup>162</sup> For the other nominees, A. N. Girenko, Iu. A. Manaenkov, and E. S. Stroeve, the announcement was equally 'unexpected': O. T. Dzhevlanov and V. A. Mikheev, *Nomenklatura: evoliutsiia otbora* (Moscow: Luch, 1993), 88–9. According to Vorotnikov, Gorbachev thought consultation with the candidates themselves would have been 'premature'; it was, he adds, a 'characteristic moment' (*A bylo eto tak*, 294, 295). There was no reference of this kind in the published version of Usmanov's speech (*Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS, 19–20 sentiabria 1989 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 142–7), but it is also recorded in the memoirs of *Pravda* editor Viktor Afanas'ev, where it is incorrectly dated July 1990 (*4-ia vlast' i 4 genseka* (Moscow: Kedr, 1994), 103).

<sup>163</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 85.

<sup>164</sup> *Pravda*, 11 Sept. 1991, p. 2.

leadership in which Central Committee members had been allowed to vote their various preferences.

The Central Committee had clearly become a more active and participatory institution during the last years of communist rule; it had strengthened the rights of its various members, particularly through a still-developing commission system, and at least formally it had taken over the right to nominate the editor of *Pravda*.<sup>165</sup> But it had not established any measure of control over the political agenda: not once during the Gorbachev years, for instance, did it consider foreign policy, in spite of the far-reaching and controversial changes that were taking place in the USSR's international environment.<sup>166</sup> The Central Committee, equally, had been unable to establish control over the actions of the party leadership it nominally elected. At the party congress in 1990 it lost even nominal control over the composition of the leadership when the party rules were changed so that the election of the general secretary and his deputy (a new post) became the prerogative of the congress rather than the Central Committee. Indeed, the composition of the new Politburo lay almost entirely outside the competence of the congress itself as it was to be made up on an *ex officio* basis of the heads of the party organizations in the various republics, with only the general secretary and his deputy subject to a direct election.<sup>167</sup> It was not just the influence of the rank and file upon party policy, recalled a former official, that was virtually non-existent; the members of leading party bodies, from district level up to the Central Committee, were 'just as powerless', playing the role of a kind of 'democratic camouflage' for the full-time officials in the central apparatus who 'enjoyed unlimited authority'.<sup>168</sup>

The Central Committee, meanwhile, was losing its cohesion as it came to incorporate the widening divisions within a rapidly changing society, and its meetings became increasingly confrontational. 'Angry scenes erupted regularly', recalled Valerii Boldin, who headed Gorbachev's personal staff; and as the general secretary's position within the Central Committee became embattled, he became increasingly reluctant to work through it and through party structures in general. 'Both the composition of the Central Committee and the mood of the party no longer suited him,' Boldin recalled. There was an 'atmosphere of mutual incomprehension and dissatisfaction'; fewer members of the Central Committee came to visit the general secretary when plenums were taking place; nobody applauded

<sup>165</sup> The election of I. T. Frolov as Central Committee Secretary and chief editor of *Pravda* took place at the December 1989 plenum (*Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS, 9 dekabria 1989 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 4. On the development of the Central Committee commissions see above, pp. 224–5.

<sup>166</sup> Anatolii Dobrynin, *Sugubo doveritel'no: posol v Vashingtone pri shesti prezidentakh SSbA (1962–1986 gg.)* (Moscow: Avtor, 1997), 655.

<sup>167</sup> *Materialy XXVIII S"ezda Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1990), 119–20 (Rules 25 and 28).

<sup>168</sup> Onikov, *KPSS*, 75–6; similarly in *Rossiiskie vesti*, 21 Oct. 1992, p. 2.

when he made his appearance, and ‘many just went on with their conversations or wandered around the hall, paying no attention to him’.<sup>169</sup> Gorbachev himself told his aide Anatolii Cherniaev that 70 per cent of the Central Committee and of its full-time apparatus were ‘against him and hated him’;<sup>170</sup> in these circumstances he ‘began to dread Central Committee plenums’, and became more receptive to the views of members of the leadership who were committed to him personally but at the same time to a form of democratization that bypassed the CPSU, such as Alexander Iakovlev.<sup>171</sup> By 1990, in his memoranda to the general secretary, Iakovlev was describing the Central Committee, after the Politburo, as the ‘chief obstacle to *perestroika* and to our entire policy’, and suggesting that there was ‘no need to convene them so often’.<sup>172</sup> The development of a system of presidential government, from 1990 onwards, was intended to marginalize the party in precisely this sense, although there was as yet no structure of authority that a president could deploy in place of the party hierarchy that had dominated the Soviet system since virtually its inception.

The Central Committee certainly provided an occasion at which opponents of reform could attack ‘saboteurs’, ‘social narcomania’, ‘ideological AIDS’, or even ‘counter-revolution’.<sup>173</sup> But its members, taken as a whole, were not necessarily opposed to gradual reform within a socialist framework. It was not until April 1989, four years after his election, that the first public criticisms of Gorbachev were voiced at plenary meetings.<sup>174</sup> And when the Central Committee was invited to vote on the candidates the party had agreed to nominate for its hundred seats in the Congress of People’s Deputies in the spring of that year, it was clear that reformers were more popular than conservatives. Of the hundred nominated, fifty-two were elected unanimously; there were twelve votes against Gorbachev himself and fifty-nine against his close associate Alexander Iakovlev, but the largest number of all—seventy-eight—were cast against Egor Ligachev, seen just as widely as the party’s leading representative of ideological orthodoxy (when Ligachev stood for the position of deputy leader at the party congress in the summer of 1990 he was defeated so comprehensively—with only 776 votes

<sup>169</sup> Boldin, *Krushenie*, 243–50.

<sup>170</sup> Cherniaev, *Shest’ let*, 345 (Gorbachev blamed this on their ‘self-aggrandisement’).

<sup>171</sup> Gorbachev’s ‘dread’ is reported in Boldin, *Krushenie*, 406.

<sup>172</sup> Cherniaev, *Shest’ let*, 330. Cherniaev himself favoured the dismissal of a large proportion of the membership—‘like Egorychev in 1967’, as Gorbachev put it—and the formation of a rather smaller Central Committee of about a hundred (1991 *god. Dnevnik pomoshchnika Prezidenta SSSR* (Moscow: Terra/Respublika, 1997), 15, entry for 30 Apr. 1989).

<sup>173</sup> See respectively *Pravda* editor Viktor Afanas’ev in *Materialy Plenuma . . . 19–20 sentabria 1989 goda*, 81; TASS Director L. P. Kravchenko in *Materialy Plenuma . . . 8–9 oktiabria 1990 g.*, p. 80; Azerbaijan first secretary A.-R. Kh. Vezirov in *Materialy Plenuma . . . 24–25 apreliia 1989 goda*, 71; and rank-and-filer G. A. Smirnov in *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KPSS 10–11 dekabria 1990 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 68.

<sup>174</sup> Cherniaev, *Shest’ let*, 291.

out of a possible 4,683—that he announced his retirement from active politics).<sup>175</sup> When Gorbachev's own position was put to the Central Committee in April 1991 more than seventy of its members, 'expressing their categorical disagreement with attacks on [the general secretary]', collected signatures on a statement in his support;<sup>176</sup> and when the Central Committee itself considered the matter, just thirteen members voted in favour of his resignation and fourteen abstained.<sup>177</sup> Gorbachev, indeed, had outspoken supporters as well as opponents among its changing membership; one of them, the journalist Alexander Chakovskii, was understandably the source of some 'movement in the hall' when he told the plenum that met in December 1989 that 'if [the general secretary] were a person of a different sex, I would simply say I love you'.<sup>178</sup>

And notwithstanding its slow disintegration, the Central Committee was able almost to the end to retain its position as the locus of moral authority within the party, and as a community of influentials among whom it might hope to rediscover a sense of purpose. As Stalin had put it in 1931, the Central Committee was the 'wisdom of our party'; it had the 'our best industrial leaders, our best co-operative leaders, our best managers of supplies, our best military men, our best propagandists and agitators, our best experts on state farms, on collective farms, on individual peasant farms, our best experts on the nations constituting the Soviet Union and on nationalities policy'.<sup>179</sup> The Central Committee and the Control Committee, he told the 15th Congress in 1927, were together a 'leading centre of 200 to 250 comrades, regularly meeting and deciding the most important questions of our development', the core of what he described elsewhere as the party's 'general staff'.<sup>180</sup> For Gorbachev himself, in the late 1980s, the Central Committee was the party's 'brain'; for his advisor Georgii Shakhnazarov it was the 'brain and motor of the entire system of government'; for Yeltsin's press secretary, rather later, it was a body of mostly 'liberal-minded people' drawn from the 'Soviet intellectual

<sup>175</sup> For the votes at the Central Committee see *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS 15–16 marta 1989 goda* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), 18–26, and at the Congress XXVIII S"ezd, ii. 391 ('at least such a result was officially announced', commented Legostaev, *Tekhnologiya*, 180–1). Vladimir Ivashko, the successful candidate for the deputy leadership, secured 3,108 votes in favour with 1,309 against; Gorbachev himself was returned as general secretary with 3,411 in favour and 1,116 against: XXVIII S"ezd, ii. 295. Ligachev's retirement to Siberia to write his memoirs was reported in *Trud*, 21 July 1990, p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, ii. 539.

<sup>177</sup> *Materialy Plenuma* . . . 24–25 *aprelia 1989 goda*, 83. The plenum confirmed the Politburo's decision to reject Gorbachev's offer to resign (TsKhSD, *fond 89, perechen'* 12, doc. 26, 25 Apr. 1991).

<sup>178</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 86 (Gorbachev had raised the question of his resignation at the plenum: *ibid.* 61).

<sup>179</sup> I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1951), 107.

<sup>180</sup> *XV S"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi partii (bol'shevikov)* (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928), 69; and for the 'general staff', I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1(14) (Stanford, Cal.: Hoover, 1967), 220.



elite'.<sup>181</sup> Chakovskii, speaking to the Central Committee in December 1989, confessed that he found the experience overwhelming. If anyone had told him in 1930, when he joined the Komsomol, or in 1939, when he became a candidate member of the party, that one day he would address the entire Central Committee, he would have regarded it as a joke. For him, he explained, 'the concept of "the Central Committee" was and remains something sacred'.<sup>182</sup>

The Central Committee's inability to capitalize on this potential for regeneration was in the end a verdict on a Leninist doctrine that had always conceived of a party led by professional revolutionaries with a largely passive rank and file.<sup>183</sup> It was a verdict on a party that had failed, for this and other reasons, to democratize its own organization at a time when the wider society was changing as a result of policies the party had itself initiated, and a verdict more particularly on the 'inner party', a 'relatively small but extraordinarily influential stratum' of its leading officials who had shown no willingness to share the monopoly of political initiative that they enjoyed on the basis of democratic centralism.<sup>184</sup> It was less clearly a verdict on Marxism—there was, at least, little pressure to change a set of policies that ensured relatively low prices for basic commodities, and guaranteed employment and political stability.<sup>185</sup> But it was certainly a verdict on an elite that had extracted every possible advantage from its access to positions of power, particularly in the Brezhnev years; and it was also a verdict on a political tradition that, even before 1917, had generated few of the institutions that might have helped to sustain a broader distribution of political power within the party itself and within the wider society, including an independent judicial system, a press that was free to criticize the actions of the leadership, and bodies like trade unions that could defend the interests of ordinary citizens. It was a tradition that privileged a single body of ideas, whether Orthodoxy or Marxism-Leninism; in which opposition was regarded as disloyal, or even treasonable; and in which a strong leader—tsar, general secretary, or president—was always more powerful than the elected bodies to which he was meant to be accountable or the courts that were meant to ensure that his actions were lawful. This, clearly, was not a political environment in which a democratized party with a Central Committee that articulated the concerns of its ordinary members was likely to develop.

<sup>181</sup> Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak*, 348; Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody*, 501; Viacheslav Kostikov, *Roman s Prezidentom* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1997), 81, 271, in reference to the Gorbachev-era political elite as a whole.

<sup>182</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 4, 1990, p. 85 (addressing the December 1989 plenum).

<sup>183</sup> See e.g. A. J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics* (London: Methuen, 1984).

<sup>184</sup> Afanas'ev, *4-ia vlast'*, 123, 82. Even Boris Yeltsin, from a rather different perspective, agreed that the 'wide gap between the party leadership and the mass of ordinary party members' had been 'one of the major causes of the Soviet Communist Party's collapse' (*Segodnia*, 28 Oct. 1997, p. 1).

<sup>185</sup> See e.g. William L. Miller, Stephen White, and Paul Heywood, *Values and Political Change in Postcommunist Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

## 7 | Elite and Society

When a class takes power, one of its parts becomes the agent of that power. Thus arises bureaucracy. In a socialist state, where capitalist accumulation is forbidden by members of the ruling party, this differentiation begins as a functional one; it later becomes a social one.

Christian Rakovskii, 1928

Privileges have only half their worth if they cannot be transmitted to one's children. But the right of testament is inseparable from the right of property. It is not enough to be the director of a trust; it is necessary to be a stockholder. The victory of the bureaucracy in this decisive sphere would mean its conversion into a new possessing class.

Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, 1937

The Soviet Communist Party was in power for a longer continuous period than any other political regime in modern times. And throughout the period, except for a few months after October 1917, it was a party in exclusive control of government. There were clearly times during its seventy years of power in which the CPSU had been superseded as an instrument of rule by the secret police, or by Stalin's personal secretariat. Nor was there, until 1977, a constitutional basis for the party's monopoly of power: the 1924 Soviet constitution made no reference to the party whatsoever, and the 1936 constitution referred to it as the 'leading core of working-class organizations' but not necessarily of the state itself. There were, indeed, several parties in most of the East European states, within an alliance that was dominated by Communists. But there was no legal basis for another political party in the USSR until 1990, when the CPSU's leading role was removed from the constitution, and there was no challenge of this kind up to the late 1980s, when a number of 'informal' movements began to erode the party monopoly. Indeed, for many it was the dominance of a single party that *defined* a communist political system.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was there any doubt, throughout the period, that the party leadership in

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Stephen White, 'What is a Communist System?', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 16: 4 (Winter 1983), 247–63.

the Politburo and Secretariat was in a position of unchallenged dominance. In part this was a result of the operation of 'democratic centralism', the organizational principle to which the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party had committed itself as early as 1906, and which allowed no legitimate opposition to the decisions of higher levels of the party hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> In part also it was a result of the party leadership's control over the means of persuasion and—if they needed them—of coercion. The top leadership, defined as the collective membership of the Politburo and Secretariat, were a small proportion of the Central Committee by the end of the Soviet period, and a proportion that had been steadily diminishing. But in the early years there was a considerable overlap: the Politburo and Secretariat accounted for ten of the nineteen full members of the Central Committee that was elected in 1920, and for nearly a third of the rather larger full membership that was elected in 1924, after Lenin's death. The Central Committee subsumed the party leadership; its own decisions were binding upon lower levels of the party organization; and throughout the period there were no party or state bodies that could legitimately challenge its authority.

The Central Committee, accordingly, provided the core of the regime for more or less its entire existence; and its changing composition and influence upon party decision-making were at the centre of the changing nature of the Soviet system as a whole. In these last chapters we consider several aspects of this changing elite more closely: in the first place, the extent to which it was representative of the party and of the wider society, and the extent to which its individual members were materially privileged. Did the Central Committee reflect the composition of the party that had elected it, or did it diverge as its members strengthened their own control over the selection process? Was it representative of the party congress to which it was formally accountable, or of the wider society in whose name it spoke? And equally, did its members take advantage of the opportunities that they enjoyed for personal enrichment, given their control over government and their freedom from press criticism and legal challenge? Had their entire ruling group, as some argued, evolved into a 'caste' that could seek to convert their dominance into the longer-term security of private property, in a process that was central to the 'transition' of the early 1990s?

## A Representative Elite?

The Central Committee, like the party congress that elected it, was meant to represent the 'best of the best' within the party's ranks. In Voroshilov's words at the

<sup>2</sup> For the original formulation see *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, 9th edn., 15 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1983–9), i. 206; the principle was retained in all subsequent editions up to and including that of 1990.

14th Congress in 1925, the whole Central Committee was a 'Leninist collective' that received the 'entirety of power after the congress and direct[ed] the whole life of the party, carrying the entire responsibility for its leadership'; in a later formulation it was a 'skilled collective of leaders, devoted to the cause of the party, closely linked to the party and non-party masses, with a knowledge of life and of the needs of society'.<sup>3</sup> It was, in fact, an amalgam of three rather different constituencies. The Central Committee, for a start, had to include the top party leadership, which was disproportionately male and Russian and—at least in the post-Stalin years—middle-aged and then elderly. At the same time it had to incorporate the chief executors of policy—those who headed the most important institutions and public organizations, and who were able to count upon an increasingly automatic right of membership as the 'job-slot' system became established. This imparted a further bias to its membership, towards those who worked in the larger cities and government offices, and who were also more likely, in later decades, to be male, with a higher education, middle-aged, and Slavic than the membership as a whole or the wider society. And thirdly, there was a symbolic constituency—the workers and collective farmers who represented the social forces that the party claimed to represent, together with the 'people's intelligentsia' that had developed over the years of Soviet rule—teachers, doctors, scientists, and administrators. Both of these groups imparted—and were intended to impart—a reverse bias, in that they brought in larger numbers of women, of the less educated, and of minority nationalities.

To some extent these competing pressures could be accommodated by enlarging the total membership of the Central Committee. From twenty-nine full members and candidates in 1917 the CC grew to forty-six in 1922, eighty-seven in 1924, and 139 in 1934. There was sharp increase to 236 in 1952, and then a steady growth thereafter to the 477 full and candidate members who were elected at the first congress Gorbachev addressed as leader in 1986. Party membership, however, was increasing even more rapidly, which meant that the Central Committee became a steadily diminishing proportion. In 1924, just after Lenin's death, there was a Central Committee member for every 5,000 members of the party; but by the 1930s there were 19,000 party members for each member of the Central Committee, and by the 1950s nearly 30,000. By the time of Gorbachev's first congress as leader in 1986 there were 40,000 party members for every member of the Central Committee, and by the time of the party's last congress in 1990 there were 46,670 ordinary members for each member of the Central Committee that nominally represented them. Very soon after 1917 the Central Committee had ceased to be an extended gathering of the leadership, and by the 1980s it was an assembly whose individual members might

<sup>3</sup> XIV S"ezd Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b) 18–25 dekabria 1925 goda. *Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), 396 (Voroshilov); N. A. Petrovichev *et al.*, *Partiinoe stroitel'stvo*, 6th edn. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981), 163.

be said to represent as large a constituency as an elected deputy in a Western parliament.

Clearly, the Central Committee was not 'representative' in the Western sense, in that its members were not freely chosen by those in whose name they spoke. But how representative was it in a more sociological sense of the party membership, of congress delegates, and of the wider society they directed? In what follows we consider the CC's changing composition through a cross-sectional analysis of each of the periods that we considered in earlier chapters, from the 'revolutionary elite' of 1917–23 and onwards (see Tables 7.1 to 7.5). Our cross-sectional analyses, in addition, are distributed at relatively even intervals across the Soviet era, and at points that coincide as closely as possible with national censuses: for example, the 18th Congress (1939) with the 1939 census and the 22nd Congress (1961) with the census of 1959. The first national census in the Soviet period was in 1926, which makes it impossible to make such a comparison during the period of our 'revolutionary elite', and we have accordingly begun our analysis with the Central Committee that was elected at the 14th Party Congress of late 1925. This is within what we have called the early Stalinist period, but—as we have stressed earlier—there are many similarities with the revolutionary period, which was also dominated by our first generation of leaders.

The Central Committee, for a start, was always more representative of male than of female party members, a disproportion that was still more conspicuous in a society in which women accounted for more than half of the total population. The 14th Congress, which met in December 1925, elected only three women to the Central Committee out of a total of 106 members and candidates; there was an even smaller proportion of women among the delegates at the congress itself, although the proportion was considerably larger among delegates from more industrial regions (see Table 7.1).<sup>4</sup> Russians were better represented on this early Stalinist Central Committee than their share of total population would have warranted, but they were less well represented than among the party membership as a whole. For purposes of comparison our tables show only the size of the second-largest ethnic group, the Ukrainians, but in 1925 the Central Committee also included a large number of Jews (12 per cent), Caucasian minorities (7 per cent), and Baltic minorities (5 per cent). Ukrainians, for their part, were not well represented, with a smaller proportion of the new Central Committee membership (5 per cent) than they had enjoyed at the congress, and a smaller share than they represented among the wider party membership or the society as a whole. Central Committee membership at this time was very heavily concentrated among those in their thirties and forties; in the terms we employ in this study it was a Central Committee of the 'first generation', nearly all of whom had been born between 1881 and 1900, and all but five of whom had been party members since before the

<sup>4</sup> *XIV S"ezd*, 810 (the proportion of women was 6% among delegates from more industrial regions).

**Table 7.1.** CC, party, and society in 1925

	Gender, % female	Nationality		Age (of all over 20) %				Birthplace/ residence		Social origin			Education, % higher education	
		%	Russian	%	Ukrainian	20-9	30-9	40-9	50+			% peasantry collective farmer		% White- collar/other
										% town	% village			
Central Committee (n=106)	2.8	59.8	5.2	3.8	52.8	34.9	8.5	56.3	43.8	54.7	—	45.3	40.0	
Congress delegates (n=1,306)	2.4	61.1	6.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	62.2	5.7	32.1	5.1	
Communist Party (n=1,088,037)	10.3	72.2	7.0	45.3	39.4	15.3	—	—	—	57.9	25.3	16.8	0.8	
Population, 17 Dec 1926 census (n=147,027,915)	51.7	52.9	21.2	34.3	23.3	29.4	13.0	17.9	82.1	12.4	77.8	9.8	0.3	

*Note:* The birthplace/residence column refers to the birthplace of the CC members, but to the current residence of the population.

*Sources:* For the CC, authors' data (the distributions for nationality and birthplace are based on the 97 and 96 individuals, respectively, for whom this information is known); age and social origin are based on *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, 1st edn., vol. 11 (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1930), cols. 539-40. For the 1925 Congress, *XIV S"ezd*, pp. 809-10 (voting members only). For the Communist Party, *Partiia v tsifrovom osvещenii. Materialy po statistike lichnogo sostava partii* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925), 5, 41, 86-7, 99-100, 106 (data as of 1 Jan. 1925). For the population *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, 56 vols. (Moscow: Izdanie TsSU, 1928-33), other than for social origin and education, which are taken from *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let. Iubileinyi statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1987), 11, 39 (no educational data were collected in the 1926 census and the figure that is reported for higher education relates graduates in 1928 to the over-15 population).

Revolution. It was a Central Committee, equally, whose social status was complex. On the one hand, official statistics maintained that the CC contained virtually no peasants (that is, individuals who were currently employed on the land); on the other hand, over 40 per cent of its members had been born in villages. Throughout its history, in fact, the Central Committee was relatively evenly balanced between town-born and village-born members. The proportion of town-born members (56 per cent), however, was higher for the Central Committee that was elected in 1925 than any of the others we will consider in this chapter, and this at a time when Russia was still an overwhelmingly peasant country with more than four-fifths of its population living in the countryside.

It was in levels of education and experience, perhaps, that the Central Committee, both of the revolutionary and of the early Stalinist period, stood out most clearly from the Soviet population of the time. According to the census that was conducted in the year after the 1925 congress, more than half the population aged over 9 was illiterate,<sup>5</sup> with still higher proportions among women, rural-dwellers, and those aged over 50. There was a serious problem of illiteracy within the Communist Party itself, with 3 per cent of its members unable to read or write,<sup>6</sup> and only 1 per cent had a higher education.<sup>7</sup> Levels of literacy were lowest of all among the Central Asian nationalities: more than a third of the Uzbek party members were illiterate at this time, and nearly half of the Turkmenians.<sup>8</sup> Delegates to the party congress in 1925, however, were much better educated than the membership as a whole—more than 5 per cent had a higher education;<sup>9</sup> and the Central Committee itself had a much higher level than this, with 40 per cent of its membership being beneficiaries of a higher education of some kind.

It was a Central Committee, indeed, that contained many members who were distinctive in their scholarship and cosmopolitanism as well as in their educational achievement, with a substantial representation from the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia. Nikolai Bukharin, for Lenin the party's 'most valuable and eminent theoretician', was a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and (in later life) a novelist. Lenin himself was a law graduate; so were Lev Kamenev and Aleksei Rykov, and, from our case studies, Nikolai Krestinskii. Viacheslav Molotov came from an artistic family, played the violin 'with great feeling and

<sup>5</sup> *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda*, 56 vols. (Moscow: Izdanie TsSU, 1928–33), xvii. table 12 (55.1% of males aged 10 or more were able to read, but just 31.1% of women and 42.6% of males and females together).

<sup>6</sup> *Partiia v tsifrovom osveshnenii. Materialy po statistike lichnogo sostava partii* (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1925), 102.

<sup>7</sup> *Sotsial'nyi i natsional'nyi sostav VKP(b). Itogi Vsesoiuznoi partiinoi perepisi 1927 goda* (Moscow–Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928), 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 145 (36.1% of Uzbek, 43.4% of Kirgiz, and 46.2% of Turkmenian party members were illiterate).

<sup>9</sup> *XIV S"ezd*, 810.

expressiveness', and was related to the composer Scriabin.<sup>10</sup> A number of this early generation had studied abroad while in political exile: Dmitrii Manuil'skii, active in the Comintern, was a law graduate of the Sorbonne, where Grigorii Sokol'nikov, People's Commissar for Finance, had taken a doctorate in economics; and diplomat Christian Rakovskii, born in Bulgaria, had studied medicine at Geneva and Montpellier, where he completed a doctorate on the causes of criminality that—in his own words—'caused a sensation among the students and professors and led to a specialised world literature'.<sup>11</sup> As we suggest in Chapters 1 and 2, the educational level of the Central Committee in the revolutionary and early Stalinist periods has been exaggerated by some historians. About a quarter of the Central Committee had no more than a primary education and only a very small proportion had been educated abroad; indeed, there was a clear disjunction within the Central Committee between a smaller group who had been abroad and a larger group who had not. But the Central Committee in these early years did reflect a generation of the Soviet elite that attached particular importance to 'verbal and literary facility and a sophisticated knowledge of "theory"';<sup>12</sup> and even those whose initial education had been more limited, like Stalin or, from our case studies, Iosif Vareikis, paid serious attention to intellectual achievement. It was a level of intellectual achievement, moreover, that clearly distinguished the Central Committee as a whole from the population as a whole, the party membership, and even the congress delegates that had elected it.

The Central Committee that assembled in 1939 and which represented the late Stalinist elite was dominated numerically by quite different individuals, but as a collective it shared a number of important characteristics with the Central Committees that had preceded it (see Table 7.2.) It was, for instance, just as exclusively male, although there had been an increase in female representation within the party and within the party congress itself by this time. Like its counterpart of 1925, it was still a Central Committee of the younger middle-aged, although its average age had fallen slightly. In other respects, however, the Central Committee of 1939 was rather different from that of 1925. The regime had been in power fourteen years longer, and the majority were men who had been born in the first decades of the twentieth century; they were representative, by this time, of the 'Brezhnev' or second generation, rather than the generation that had been born in the last decades of the previous century.

The late Stalinist Central Committee of 1939 was also more representative of

<sup>10</sup> For Lenin's view of Bukharin see V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th edn., 55 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1958–65), xlv. 345; Bukharin's novel *Vremena* (Moscow: Progress-Kul'tura, 1994) was written in prison during the winter of 1937–8. Molotov described his own family background in *Deiateli SSSR i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia Rossiia: Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Granat* (Moscow: Sovetskaiia entsiklopediia, 1989), 553.

<sup>11</sup> *Deiateli*, 611.

<sup>12</sup> T. H. Rigby, 'The Soviet political elite under Lenin', in his *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990), 27.



**Table 7.2.** CC, party, and society in 1939

	Gender, % female	Nationality		Age (of all over 20) %					Birthplace/residence		Education, % higher education
		% Russian	% Ukrainian	Up to 29	30–9	40–9	50–9	60+	% town	% country	
Central Committee (n = 139)	2.2	69.6	21.4	0.0	53.9	30.8	10.0	5.4	42.5	57.5	80.2
Congress delegates (n = 1574)	9.1	—	—	49.5 <sup>a</sup>		47.5 <sup>b</sup>	3.0		—	—	26.5
Communist Party (n = 2,477,666)	14.5	65.8	18.0	25.8	51.4	17.3	4.7	0.8	—	—	5.1
Population, 17 Jan. 1939 census (n = 170,557,093)	52.1	58.4	16.5	32.4	27.0	16.4	11.9	12.3	32.9	67.1	0.6

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>=up to 35; <sup>b</sup>=aged 36–49. The birthplace/residence column refers to the birthplace of the CC members, but to the current residence of the population.

*Sources:* For the Central Committee, authors' data (the distributions for nationality, age and birthplace are based on the 112, 130, and 113 members respectively for whom this information is known). For the 1939 Congress, *XVIII S<sup>em</sup>ezd Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b) 10–21 marta 1939 g. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1939), 146–50. For the Communist Party, derived from T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR 1917–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 361, 356, 375, 401. For the population, derived from *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda. Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992).

the wider society in its social origins. Unlike the Central Committee of 1925, more of its members had been born in the country than in the town; and as rural-dwellers were about two-thirds of the total population at this time, it was an elite that shared a geographical background with the mass of the society to a greater extent than in the past. The composition of the Central Committee at this time, especially of its second-generation members, calls for some reconsideration of Barrington Moore's well-known verdict on the peasant revolution, in the USSR and elsewhere: 'The peasants have provided the dynamite to bring down the old building. To the subsequent work of reconstruction they have brought nothing; instead they have been . . . its first victims.'<sup>13</sup> In fact, in the very period that the Soviet government turned against the peasants through the policy of forced collectivization it also transformed large numbers of them, co-opting them into the party and—a decade later—promoting them to elite positions.

At the same time the Central Committee remained a more educated group than the party and society for whom it spoke. Among the population as a whole, only 81.2 per cent of those aged over 9 were literate when the 1939 census was conducted: this was one of the reasons why its full results were suppressed, as social problems of this kind were supposed to have been 'liquidated' by the new regime.<sup>14</sup> Among party members there was still some illiteracy in the Central Asian republics, a problem that persisted until after the war.<sup>15</sup> But substantially larger numbers had completed a higher education by the time of the 1939 congress, as had a quarter of the delegates at the congress itself; and at the level of the Central Committee a higher education was general, if not yet universal (Lazar' Kaganovich, who ran the energy industry, had not even completed an elementary schooling). It was, however, a different and more vocational higher education than had been received by the better-educated members of the Central Committee of the 1920s.

In ethnic terms, the representative quality of the 1939 Central Committee was less clear-cut. Within the 1939 borders of the USSR ethnic Russians made up only 58 per cent of the population. The Russian proportion on the Central Committee

<sup>13</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 480.

<sup>14</sup> There was still greater embarrassment with the results of the 1937 census: see V. B. Zhiromskaia, I. N. Kisilev, and Iu. A. Poliakov, *Polveka pod grifom 'sekretno': Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1937 goda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1996), 94. Male literacy was reported at 86%, but female literacy was just 66.2%; the entire census was suppressed, the head of the census bureau was shot, and the compilers as a group were accused of being 'Trotskyite-Bukharinist spies'. There was also some disappointment that 56.7% of those aged over 16 considered themselves religious believers (see A. Volkov, 'Kak stalo krivym zerkalo obshchestva', *Voprosy statistiki*, 3 (1997), 14–21, at p. 17). Molotov took personal charge of the 1939 census, which yielded 'better' but not entirely satisfactory results and was not published in full for more than 50 years (see Iu. A. Poliakov (ed.), *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda. Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 4–5).

<sup>15</sup> T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR, 1917–1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 404–5.

was about 70 per cent, 10 per cent higher than it had been in 1925, so Russians were even more over-represented than they had been among the late revolutionary or early Stalinist elite. On the other hand, groups that had been over-represented in 1925—Jews, the Baltic nationalities, and Transcaucasian nationalities—now formed a much smaller part of the total membership. Ukrainians, by contrast, had been under-represented in 1925, but now they were over-represented, with a larger share of Central Committee membership than they commanded among the party membership, and a still larger proportion than the 16 per cent or so that they represented among the population as a whole.

The 22nd Congress took place in 1961, in the very different circumstances of a country that had helped to win the war and which had afterwards seen an enormous increase in its international authority. It was the third congress that Khrushchev himself addressed as party leader, and the last. The Khrushchevite elite was still overwhelmingly male, although by this time there were eleven women among the full and candidate members of the Central Committee and there were much higher proportions among the total membership and among delegates to the Congress itself (see Table 7.3). It was a much more highly educated Central Committee, reflecting a congress and party within which the proportion of those with a higher education had more than doubled since 1939 (there was even a member, Ivan Senin, who had studied at Columbia University in New York); but it remained a predominantly village-born Central Committee, reflecting a society more than half of whose members still lived in the countryside. Among the various nationalities, Russians, as before, were somewhat over-represented in relation to their share of total population, although not to their share of the party membership as a whole. The slight Ukrainian advantage had almost, but not quite, disappeared. But if the median Central Committee member in 1939 had been in his thirties, in common with a majority of the mass membership, by 1961 the median member was in his fifties. In contrast to the change from 1925 to 1939, these were often not different individuals but the same ones grown older; the party had aged as well, but the median member in 1961 was still in his thirties and the median member of the wider society was in his twenties.

The Central Committee had aged again by the time of the 1976 congress, the third of the four that were held under the Brezhnev leadership. If the median member was in his fifties in 1961, he was in his sixties by the time of the 25th Congress (see Table 7.4.) The second generation, to which Brezhnev himself belonged, had clearly consolidated its presence: if nearly two-thirds of members were over 50 in 1961, now it was an overwhelming 85 per cent, and nearly half were over 60, which was the male retirement age. The congress that elected the new Central Committee was considerably younger: 13 per cent were in their twenties or early thirties, and only 10 per cent were over 60.<sup>16</sup> The mass of

<sup>16</sup> XXV S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 24 fevralia–5 marta 1976 goda. *Stenograficheskii otchet*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1976), i. 298.

**Table 7.3.** CC. party, and society in 1961

	Gender, % female	Nationality		Age (of all over 20) %					Birthplace/residence		Education, % higher education
		% Russian	% Ukrainian	Up to 29	30-9	40-9	50-9	60+	% town	% country	
Central Committee (n=330)	3.3	62.4	18.3	0.3	4.6	32.4	51.5	11.2	45.0	55.0	80.9
Congress delegates (n=4,799)	22.3	—	—	38.6		37.9	23.5		—	—	52.5
Communist Party (n=9,716,005)	19.7	65.8	18.0	22.4	36.2	24.0	14.1	3.3	—	—	13.3
Population, 15 Jan. 1959 census (n=208,826,650)	55.0	54.6	17.8	29.5	23.4	17.4	14.7	15.1	47.9	52.1	2.9

*Note:* The birthplace/residence column refers to the birthplace of the CC members, but to the current residence of the population.

*Sources:* For the Central Committee, authors' data (the distributions for nationality and birthplace are based on the 195 and 300 members respectively for whom this information is known). For the 1961 Congress, *XXII S'ezd*, i. 424-9. For the Communist Party, *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, 1 (1962), 47-9 (completed higher education only), other than for age, where the data are taken from apparently representative republican figures in Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, 356. For the population *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda. SSSR (Svodnyi tom)* (Moscow: Gosstatizdat, 1962).

**Table 7.4.** CC, party, and society in 1976

	Gender, % female	Nationality		Age (of all over 20) %					Birthplace/residence		Education, % higher education
		% Russian	% Ukrainian	Up to 29	30-9	40-9	50-9	60+	% town	% country	
Central Committee (n=426)	3.3	66.4	16.1	0.0	0.5	15.0	38.0	46.5	41.9	58.1	91.2
Congress delegates (n= 4,998)	25.1	—	—	12.5 <sup>a</sup>		58.0 <sup>b</sup>	19.7	9.8	—	—	<sup>c</sup>
Communist Party (n=15,694,187)	24.7	60.6	16.0	16.6	25.9	26.4	62.3	37.7	—	—	26.8
Population, 17 Jan. 1979 census (n=262,436,227)	53.5	52.4	16.2	26.2	17.6	20.7	16.0	19.6	62.3	37.7	9.1

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>=up to 35; <sup>b</sup>=aged 35-50; <sup>c</sup>='Nearly 90%' had a complete or incomplete higher or secondary education; this compared with 85.6% of the party membership and 69.9% of the over-15 population. The birthplace/residence column refers to the birthplace of the CC members, but to the current residence of the population.

*Sources:* For the Central Committee, authors' data (the distributions for nationality and birthplace are based on the 411 and 370 members respectively for whom this information is known). For the 1976 Congress, *XXI/S<sup>vezd</sup>*, i. 295-8. For the Communist Party, *Partiinaia zbirn'*, 10 (1976), 13-17 (reporting figures for Jan. 1976), other than for age, which is derived from *ibid.* 21 (1977), 21 (reporting figures for Jan. 1977). For the population *Chislennost' i sostav naseleniia SSSR. Po dannym Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1979 goda* (Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1984).

ordinary members, equally, were younger than the Central Committee (just 13 per cent were over 60); so too was the wider society (fewer than 20 per cent among the population as a whole were over 60). It was an overwhelmingly male Central Committee, once again, although the proportion of women among party members had continued to increase: just over 3 per cent of the new Central Committee were women, the same as in 1961, which compared with a quarter of the mass membership and of congress delegates, and over 30 per cent among those who were joining the party for the first time.<sup>17</sup> Within the Politburo and Secretariat that were elected after the Congress, in still sharper contrast, not a single member was a woman.

This Central Committee, then, was male and elderly. It was also disproportionately Russian, more so in relation to the party membership than any of its predecessors, and still more so in relation to a total population—within which the Russian and Slavic proportion was steadily declining. In terms of origins it was a more rural Central Committee (58 per cent village born) than its predecessors, at a time when the society was steadily urbanizing, but it was a better educated body than ever before, particularly in the technical sciences.

There were further changes in the 1990 Central Committee, the last elected under Gorbachev's leadership and the last of all such elections. There were thirty-three women on the new Central Committee, a record, although their share of Congress delegates was less than it had been since the 1920s as the 'quota' basis of representation came to an end (see Table 7.5). The female share of party membership, on the other hand, had been steadily increasing, and women were better represented in the Politburo and Secretariat than at any previous time. In terms of nationality the new Central Committee corresponded reasonably closely to the party and society that it directed, although Ukrainians had lost their earlier advantage. The median member, as in the Khrushchev years, was in his fifties, and more than half (55 per cent) were in our 'third generation', born—like Gorbachev himself—after the Revolution but before the Second World War; this compared with 41 per cent of the party's mass membership, and 38 per cent of the adult population. But the average age of Central Committee members had fallen considerably, from 58 after the 27th Party Congress in 1986 to just 49;<sup>18</sup> and it was a less rural Central Committee than its Brezhnevite predecessors, although in spite of the changes that had taken place in the wider society the village-born were still more numerous than their urban counterparts.

By 1990 information was becoming available on the current occupation and

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. (25.1% of all delegates at the Congress); *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, 10 (1976), 16 (24.3% of total party membership on 1 January 1976), and ibid. 21 (1977), 26 (1976 candidates).

<sup>18</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 3. The figures for the age of party membership and the adult population are taken from Table 7.5. The 'third generation', are those born in 1921–40; for 1990 these were taken to be those individuals in the age bands '50–9' and '60+.'

**Table 7.5.** CC, party, and society in 1990

	Gender, % female	Nationality		Age (of all over 20) %					Birthplace/ residence		Occupation			Education, % higher education
		% Russian	% Ukrainian	Up to 29	30-9	40-9	50-9	60+	% town	% rural	Working- class	Collective farmer	White- collar	
Central Committee (n=412)	8.0	51.9	12.4	0.7	12.9	31.3	44.4	10.7	48.8	51.2	23.5	2.2	74.3	76.5
Congress (n=4,863)	7.3	—	—	1.5	—	—	—	2.9	—	—	11.6	5.4	—	— <sup>a</sup>
Communist Party (n=19,228,217)	30.2	58.2	16.2	14.0	26.0	19.1	20.0	20.9	—	—	27.6	7.6	40.5	37.3
Population, 12 Jan. 1989 census (n=286,730,817)	52.9	50.8	15.5	23.5	23.3	15.1	17.1	21.2	65.9	34.1	58.8	11.7	29.3	10.8

*Note:* <sup>a</sup>=‘Nearly 99%’ had a complete or incomplete higher or secondary education; this compared with 93.7% of the party membership and 81.2% of the over-15 population. The birthplace/residence column refers to the birthplace of the CC members, but to the current residence of the population.

*Sources:* For the Central Committee, authors’ data. For the 1990 Congress, *XXVIII S’ezd*, i. 182–5. For the Communist Party, *Izvestiia TSK KPSS*, 4 (1990), 113–15 (reporting figures for 1 Jan. 1990). For the population *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda*, 12 vols. (Minneapolis: East View and Moscow: Statisticheskii komitet Sotrudzhestva nezavisimykh gosudarstv, 1991–3).

not just the social origin of the party's mass membership and of its leading bodies. It was a society in which the working class, as defined by Soviet statistics, accounted for more than half the population and, with collective farmers, for more than 70 per cent (the working class were considered to be those who were occupied in predominantly manual labour in industry, or in state-owned rather than collective-farm agriculture). Within the CPSU workers and collective farmers formed more than 35 per cent of the total; but they were poorly represented at the congress, where it was 'obviously insufficient' to have only 12 per cent of delegates from the working class (another 350 had been invited to take part in the proceedings) as compared with more than 40 per cent who were full-time party functionaries.<sup>19</sup> The new Central Committee was also conspicuous for its high level of education, and particularly of higher education. There were eleven full and eight corresponding members of the USSR Academy of Science among the new members; fifty-five held a higher doctorate, and another fifty-nine a candidate of science degree (equivalent to a Western Ph.D).<sup>20</sup>

The Central Committee, in fact, was typical of revolutionary elites more generally. Like them, it was disproportionately male, and more highly educated than the society it sought to lead, although its members, even in the early years, were less likely to be from a privileged or urban background than its counterparts in other societies.<sup>21</sup> The Central Committee was never directly representative of the different age-groups, genders, levels of education, and occupations within the party or the wider society; but it was often more representative of the mass membership and of the population as a whole than the national party leadership. Over the whole period of Soviet rule just 5 per cent of all full and candidate members of the Central Committee were female; this was far less than the female share of the mass membership, still less of the total population, but it was considerably more than the 2 per cent that they represented among the membership of the ruling Politburo (the Secretariat had a level of female membership comparable to that of the CC, at 5 per cent). The Central Committee, moreover, was more representative of a multinational society. Of the 1,748 members for whom this information is known, 63 per cent were Russian, which was above their share of the population but well below the disproportionate 77 per cent that they represented within the Secretariat (their share of Politburo membership, at 60 per cent over the whole period, was broadly comparable to their representation within the CC). Ukrainians were also better represented on the Central Committee than they were within the party leadership: overall, 12 per cent of the total CC membership was Ukrainian (again, where the information was known), as compared with 9 per

<sup>19</sup> XXVIII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 2-13 iuliia 1990 goda. *Stenograficheskie otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991), i. 183-4.

<sup>20</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 8, 1990, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Mostafa Rejai and Kay Phillips, *Leaders of Revolution* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979).



cent of the Politburo and just 8 per cent of the Secretariat membership; all of these, at the same time, were below the Ukrainian share of party membership and of the total population in the post-war period.<sup>22</sup>

## A Privileged Elite?

Although communism had been intended to achieve the end of social inequality, not only in Soviet Russia but also throughout the wider world, there were practices that from the outset served to distinguish the Soviet elite from other members of the society over which they ruled. Anarchists were particularly alert to the dangers of corruption and abuse of state power that might arise once a single ruling party had established its dominance. Emma Goldman, the American anarchist who had originally supported the Revolution but was forced to leave in December 1921, concluded that ‘true communism’ had never been attained in Russia—‘unless one considers 33 categories of pay, different food rations, privilege to some and indifference to the great mass as Communism’.<sup>23</sup> Another Western anarchist, Alexander Berkman, was particularly struck by the ‘special coach reserved for high Bolshevik officials and foreign guests’ on the train in which he was travelling in the early 1920s; unlike other carriages, it was clean and well upholstered, but the ordinary population were not admitted even though there was plenty of room.<sup>24</sup> There was understandably some hostility towards senior party officials who had begun to ‘ride around on carriages with three or four horses’ and who ‘ate their fill and slept soundly, with no thought of ordinary people but only of even greater privileges’; the whole question was raised at the 9th Party Conference in 1920, and a secret commission was established to investigate the matter in more detail.<sup>25</sup> The commission duly recommended a ‘significant reduction’ in the special food supplies that Kremlin leaders had enjoyed, and in their accommodation (it thought that even Trotsky and Kamenev could make do with less);<sup>26</sup> but the report remained unpublished, and the range of privileges, in the event, grew even wider with the establishment in

<sup>22</sup> This comparison is based on the authors’ data, and on A. D. Chernev, *229 kremlevskikh vozhdiei. Politbiuro, Orgbiuro, Sekretariat TsK Kommunisticheskoi partii v litsakh i tsifrakh. Spravochnik* (Moscow: Rodina/Russika, 1996), 81–5. For a preliminary analysis of the leadership itself based on this source see A. Vishnevskii, ‘Vysshiaia elita RKP(b)-VKP(b)-KPSS (1917–1989): nemnogo statistiki’, *Mir Rossii*, 4 (1997), 38–44. Any analysis based on a percentage of all CC members over the period 1917–91 is only useful for gaining a rough overview; such statistics are clearly weighted toward the later Central Committees, which had many more members than the earlier ones.

<sup>23</sup> Emma Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1924), 153.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth: Diary 1920–1922* (London: Hutchinson, 1925), 43.

<sup>25</sup> See RTsKhIDNI, *fond 17, opis’ 84, delo 230*, p. 18; the secret point in the resolution establishing a ‘Kremlin control commission’ is in *ibid.*, *fond 44, opis’ 1, delo 1*, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, *fond 17, opis’ 84, delo 111*, pp. 34–5. Some of the relevant documents are collected in V. A. Kozlov (ed.), *Neizvestnaia Rossiia. XX vek* (Moscow: Istoricheskoe nasledie, 1992), 261–71.

1922 of a special fund for the medical treatment of leading comrades and of special rules in 1924 for the admission of 'candidates nominated by party, Komsomol, and trade-union bodies' (in practice, by their leading officials) to universities and colleges.<sup>27</sup>

The Kremlin itself enjoyed a special position, with a staff of over 2,000 and its own complex of shops, including a hairdresser and a sauna, a hospital and nursery, and three large restaurants with cooks who had been trained in France. Its domestic budget in 1920, when all these services were declared free, was greater than the social welfare budget for the whole of Moscow. The Bolshevik leaders, meanwhile, settled in estates that had been confiscated from their tsarist predecessors, Lenin in a villa that had belonged to the police chief of Moscow, Trotsky in an estate that had belonged to the Iusupovs; party leaders in Petrograd preferred to base themselves in the Astoria Hotel, renamed First House of the Soviets, where they could call for room service from 'comrade waiters'.<sup>28</sup> The food orders of the Politburo and their families, during these years of bitter shortage, included caviare and cigarettes (which were rationed at the time). Lenin's own requirements included sardines and confectionery; Stalin asked for pepper; and, in addition, at least 240 pounds of caviare were distributed among leading officials every month. Avel' Enukidze, in a different form of preferential treatment, put in frequent orders for Kremlin evenings with actors and glamorous actresses.<sup>29</sup>

Ante Ciliga, a Yugoslav with oppositional sympathies, lived in party headquarters in Leningrad in the later 1920s and was able to observe at first hand the formation of a sort of 'aristocracy of the "new rich"'. It was differentiated, Ciliga noticed, not only from the society that surrounded it but also by its own status hierarchy, which reflected where a family took its holidays, how their flat was furnished, how they were dressed, and what position they occupied in the administrative hierarchy. And not only this: husbands, wives, and children had their own separate hierarchies, with husbands concerned to keep up a proletarian exterior but their wives more interested in living better than their neighbours, while their children took their position for granted and saw no reason to conceal their advantages. The lead, in many ways, was set by first secretary Kirov himself: heading south with a couple of dogs, he ordered travellers out of another carriage so that his animals could travel in comfort (the story eventually reached the columns of *Pravda*, where the newspaperman involved lost his job although Kirov had not directly been mentioned).<sup>30</sup>

An entire system of provision had developed by the early 1930s, based on a

<sup>27</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 20, 1996, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> We have drawn these details from Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* (London: Cape, 1996), 683-4.

<sup>29</sup> Natalia Filippova, 'Iz zhizni "shishlik"', *Russkii arkhiv*, 3 (1993), 230-4, at pp. 231, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Ante Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma* (London: Inks Links, 1979), 117-21.

system of special shops or 'closed distributors' (*zakrytye raspredeliteli*). The elite, including members of the Central Committee, were served by Closed Shop No. 1, which came under the personal supervision of Anastas Mikoian. In May 1932, at a time when many outside the system of privileged supply were suffering from severe malnutrition, he described the lack of cigarettes in the two special shops in Moscow as 'shameful' and instructed his subordinates to supply them with the smoking materials that were required.<sup>31</sup> For important occasions there were special forms of catering: the 500 members who attended the Central Committee plenum in September 1932, for instance, were allocated ten tonnes of meat, four tonnes of fish, 600 kilograms of cheese, and 300 kilograms of caviare, for a period of just two weeks (there were additional allowances for all of the delegates to cover the period of their journey to the plenum).<sup>32</sup> The 'party maximum', introduced by Lenin, had notionally restricted the earnings of leading comrades, if not the profusion of special benefits; but in 1932, in a secret resolution, the Politburo voted to abolish it.<sup>33</sup>

The administrative basis of a system of this kind had begun to form in the early 1920s—for some, indeed, 'from the day the Bolsheviks came to power'.<sup>34</sup> In particular, it had become clear from at least the 12th Congress in 1923 that the party intended to appoint not just its own officials but also the 'leading personnel of soviet, in particular economic and other organs'. At the outset there were two lists of positions of this kind, *Nomenklatura* No. 1 (to which appointments required Central Committee approval) and *Nomenklatura* No. 2 (to which appointments could be made by the party apparatus). A *Nomenklatura* No. 3, of nominally elective positions, began to form soon afterwards, and the system extended from central to lower-level appointments of all kinds. The *nomenklatura* lists were reviewed annually, and positions added or removed; about 5,000 appointments a year were being made in the mid-1920s, of which about half were made by party officials rather than the Central Committee itself. The system had been fully developed by the late 1930s, and over the following fifty years it was simply modified as circumstances required.<sup>35</sup> By the late Soviet period half a million party positions figured on the *nomenklatura*, allowing the party apparatus

<sup>31</sup> R. W. Davies, *Crisis and Progress in the Soviet Economy, 1931–1933* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 453–4.

<sup>32</sup> E. A. Osokina, *Ierarkhiia potrebleniia: o zbizni liudei v usloviakh stalinskogo snabzheniia, 1928–1935* gg. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MGOU, 1993), 70.

<sup>33</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 7, 1990, p. 147.

<sup>34</sup> T. P. Korzhikhina and Iu. Iu. Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura: stanovlenie, mekhanizmy deistviia', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 7, 1993, pp. 25–38, at p. 26. See also Rigby, *Political Elites*, chap. 4; V. G. Sirotkin, 'Nomenklatura (zametki istorika)', *Vestnik Akademii nauk SSSR*, no. 6, 1990, pp. 12–26; Mikhail Vozlenskii, *Nomenklatura: gosподstviushchii klass Sovetskogo Soiuza*, 2nd edn. (London: Overseas Publications, 1990); O. T. Dzhavlanov and V. A. Mikheev, *Nomenklatura: evoliutsiia otbora* (Moscow: Luch, 1993); and Maikl Levin, 'Nomenklatura—arcanum imperii', *Svobodnaia mysl'*, no. 4, 1997, pp. 75–80.

<sup>35</sup> Korzhikhina and Figatner, 'Sovetskaia nomenklatura', 26, 28–9.

to determine the destinies of at least three million members (including family members) of the society.<sup>36</sup>

There were many attempts to define the kind of society that had developed on this basis, combining public ownership with the administrative and often unequal allocation of incomes and other benefits. The chairman of the party's Central Control Commission, Aaron Sol'ts, thought he had identified the corrupting influence of power itself on leading communists as early as 1921. Writing in *Pravda*, he complained that a 'communist hierarchical caste of officials with its own group interests' had already developed—a 'communist nobility' with its own food and housing, and with entire railway lines commandeered so that its leading members were not delayed on their journeys about the country.<sup>37</sup> The diplomat Christian Rakovskii offered a more developed analysis in a celebrated letter to another oppositionist in 1928. The Soviet system, Rakovskii argued, had developed into a 'bureaucratic state with proletarian-communist survivals'. When a class took power, he explained, some of its members became agents of the new government. A differentiation began to develop, first a functional and then a social one: the difference between a miner and a party member with a car, more spacious housing, a regular holiday, and a good salary. The new bureaucracy of party and state officials that arose in this way was a 'phenomenon of a new order', a 'new social category to which a whole treatise should be devoted'; and any attempt to reform the party that based itself on them would be 'utopian'.<sup>38</sup> Ciliga and other oppositionists thought the economic foundations of the revolution had survived, but they also believed that the bureaucracy had developed into a 'class hostile to the proletariat'.<sup>39</sup>

Trotsky, writing in exile, took this analysis still further, arguing in his *Revolution Betrayed* that the elite—or as he preferred to call it, the bureaucracy—would find their privileged position unsatisfactory as it depended upon their control of political office, which was temporary and uncertain. Far better, from the elite's point of view, to protect their advantages from the vagaries of the political process and make them heritable across the generations in the same way that ruling groups in other societies had been able to do: by the private ownership of property and wealth. 'Privileges', as Trotsky pointed out in 1936, 'have only half their value if they cannot be transmitted to one's children', and for this reason the bureaucracy would 'inevitably' seek to consolidate their position through property relations.

<sup>36</sup> Leon Onikov in *Rossiiskie vesti*, 21 Oct. 1992, p. 5. A version of the central party *nomenklatura* as it existed in August 1991 is held in the party archives (Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii (TsKhSD), Moscow, *fond 89, perechen'* 20, doc. 77); it lists 7,735 positions that were regulated centrally at this time.

<sup>37</sup> *Pravda*, 12 Feb. 1921, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 6, October 1929, pp. 14–20. 'Before our eyes', he wrote elsewhere, 'a great class of rulers has been taking shape and is continuing to develop' (Rakovsky *et al.*, in *ibid.* 17–18 (Nov.–Dec. 1930), 16).

<sup>39</sup> Ciliga, *Russian Enigma*, 264–5.

The right to pass on material advantage, however, was 'inseparable from the right of property', and the victory of the elite in this decisive sphere would mean its 'conversion into a new possessing class'.<sup>40</sup> Milovan Djilas, writing twenty years later, thought a 'new class' had already come into existence based on a form of 'collective ownership' that allowed it to enjoy a 'monopoly over the distribution of material goods'.<sup>41</sup>

There were, in fact, several unwritten conventions that helped to prevent what might otherwise have been the rapid formation of a corrupt and self-recruiting caste of the kind that oppositionists thought they had identified.<sup>42</sup> One of the most important was that the children of high-level leaders should not normally obtain positions of equal prominence. 'Elite children' had a number of alternative professional outlets, often connected with work abroad, and assured for them by restricted access to the institutions that trained (for example) diplomats or journalists specializing in international affairs. These restrictions upon self-recruitment were generally effective, and throughout the whole period of Soviet rule there were very few Central Committee members who had grown up in Moscow or within a *nomenklatura* family. Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, was a member from 1927 until her death in 1939; Molotov's wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, was a candidate from 1939 to 1941 (she was later arrested during the campaign against 'cosmopolitanism' and released after Stalin's death); and two sets of brothers, Iosif and Stanislav Kosior and Lazar' and Mikhail Kaganovich, were members at various times between the 1920s and the 1950s. Stalin's son-in-law, Iurii Zhdanov, joined the Central Committee between 1952 and 1956; and Dinmukhamed Kunaev's younger brother, elected president of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in 1974, became a candidate member two years later.<sup>43</sup> Khrushchev's son-in-law Aleksei Adzhubei was a member from 1961 to 1964; and Brezhnev's son and son-in-law were members from 1981 to 1986. General Vladimir Govorov, a member from 1976 to 1990, was the son of Marshal Leonid Govorov, who had been a candidate member from 1952 to 1955. But these were the only significant departures from a well-established convention that helped to avoid a hereditary as well as a privileged ruling group. The *nomenklatura*, as Anatolii Sobchak remarked, could even be called 'democratic' in that it was prepared to draw its members from all sections of the society.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> L. Trotsky, *Predannaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow: NII Kul'tury, 1991), 210.

<sup>41</sup> Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1957), 45.

<sup>42</sup> This section draws upon Olga Kryshchanovskaia and Stephen White, 'From Soviet Nomenklatura to Russian Elite', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48: 5 (July 1996), 711-34, at pp. 714-15.

<sup>43</sup> Kunaev, in his memoirs, claimed that he had resisted the appointment ('O moem vremeni', part 2, *Prostor*, no. 11, 1991, pp. 8-53, at p. 46); he had, in fact, appointed his brother not just to the republican but also to the all-union Academy of Sciences, although the 'whole Kazakh intelligentsia despised this alcoholic dullard' (Arkadii Vaksberg, *The Soviet Mafia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), 139).

<sup>44</sup> Anatolii Sobchak, *Khozhdienie vo vlast'*, 2nd edn. (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), 51.

Any tendency towards self-recruitment based upon local associations or 'family circles' was restricted by another convention, under which it was normal for members of the *nomenklatura* (including the Central Committee) to be moved around the country and between different spheres of work. The generalists of the pre-war and wartime years were moved from central to regional posts and back again as the system itself went through radical transformations. By the more settled post-war years a *nomenklatura* career typically began with a Moscow higher education, followed by a state, party, or managerial position at a regional level, then back to Moscow for a couple of years in party headquarters, followed by a return to the provinces as—most often—a regional party first secretary with an all-but guaranteed seat on the Central Committee. Of the members we have considered most closely, Nikolai Krestinskii had moved from the Commissariat of Finances to the Central Committee Secretariat, and then into diplomatic work. Andrei Andreev moved several times between government ministries, regional posts, and the Central Committee Secretariat, with periods in the trade-union movement as well. By the 1940s there was a tendency to remain within broad areas of specialization, as regional secretaries, ministers, or military commanders, but even the first two groups were frequently reshuffled under Khrushchev. These conventions, as we have seen, began to break down during the Brezhnev years; republic and regional party secretaries, ministers, and military men more likely to remain within their own institutions, and there were more accommodating practices in recruitment. Family circles developed at the very top of the system: Brezhnev's own son Iurii became a junior trade minister in 1976, a first deputy minister in 1979, and a member of the Central Committee in 1981; his son-in-law, Iurii Churbanov, became a deputy minister of internal affairs in 1977 and a first deputy minister in 1980, joining the Central Committee a year later. Other associations within the ruling group included the veteran Bolshevik Arvid Pel'she, a Politburo member and chairman of the Party Control Commission up to his death in 1983, who was married to the sister of ideologist Mikhail Suslov; and the former first deputy chairman of the KGB, Semen Tsvigun (a member of the Central Committee), who was married to Brezhnev's sister-in-law.

Patron-client relations were a more general feature of the Soviet system; and their analysis was central to the arcane and now lost art of Kremlinology. When powerful officials moved from post to post, for instance, they often took a 'tail' of clients with them. Brezhnev himself had worked with Konstantin Chernenko in Moldavia, and then in Kazakhstan with Kunaev.<sup>45</sup> Another element was a shared institutional interest. The last Soviet minister of education, Gennadii Iagodkin, for instance, drew attention to the 'great feeling of comradeship' that brought

<sup>45</sup> His friendship with Kunaev had lasted 'almost a quarter of a century', Brezhnev recalled in his memoir *Virgin Lands* (L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1979), 128).

the ministers of culture, health, and education into an informal alliance.<sup>46</sup> There had been attempts to hinder the formation of associations of this kind, but they were abandoned during the Brezhnev leadership; one of them was the assumption that leading officials should continually change their positions to avoid too close an identification with the institution they headed. With a rather different emphasis upon 'stability of cadres', ministers and other officials became fixtures up to and even beyond their retirement age. Several, indeed, served right up to their death, including Konstantin Rudnev, who headed the Ministry of Instrument Manufacturing for twenty-two years up to 1980, Boris Butoma, who was minister for the shipbuilding industry from 1948 up to 1976, and Evgenii Alekseevskii, minister of land improvement for sixteen years up to 1979. Alexander Ishkov was minister of the fishing industry from 1940 until he lost his position in a celebrated scandal in 1979. Efim Slavskii, as we have seen, headed the ministry responsible for nuclear armaments from 1957 until 1986, when he was in his late eighties (he remained in the Central Committee until 1990); Andrei Gromyko was foreign minister for nearly thirty years until he became head of state in 1985. There were more frequent changes in the party leadership, at least at local level; but in 1981, for the first time ever, the Politburo and Secretariat were re-elected in their entirety without a single change, and Central Committee turnover slowed down dramatically. Brezhnev, in effect, had given a 'kind of guarantee' to the membership of the Central Committee that they could retain their positions so long as they did not seek in their turn to undermine his own general secretaryship.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, the Brezhnev years, as foreign-policy adviser Georgii Arbatov later described them, were the 'apotheosis' of the bureaucracy (Arbatov himself was a member of the Central Committee from 1976 up to 1990, with the relatively independent position of an institute director). Repressed under Stalin and ceaselessly reorganized under Khrushchev, now at last party and state officials had a chance to enjoy a period of stability; 'leading positions became lifetime ones, and bureaucrats—permanent'. Party secretaries and government ministers could hold the same position for fifteen or twenty years; if anything went wrong they would be recalled for a year or two as a member of the Central Committee apparatus, and then recommended (in fact, appointed) to a leading position in a different region. Incompetent ministers were shifted sideways, or a new ministry was created for them; those beyond redemption were sent abroad with an ambassadorship. The higher levels of the *nomenklatura*, in Arbatov's view, had developed into something like a 'nobility' during the Brezhnev years. They had a position for life, with a high standard of living and a range of privileges including housing, medical care, and even funerals that isolated them from the rest of society; and there was a developing network of family or 'clan' associations as their children spent their time

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in M. F. Nenashev, *Poslednee pravitel'stvo SSSR* (Moscow: Krom, 1993), 199.

<sup>47</sup> Georgii Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody. Reformatsiia Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika/Zevs, 1993), 229.

together, became acquainted, and sometimes got married.<sup>48</sup> By the 1970s there were 'dynasties of party functionaries', and for some they had already acquired the characteristics of a 'caste' or of a bureaucratic and exploitative 'class'.<sup>49</sup>

The advantages of membership by this time were certainly extensive, as a mass of memoir, interview, and survey evidence had already begun to make clear. An émigré sociologist recalled that in every town and regional centre there were 'detached and impressive mansions', hidden by foliage and disguised as sanatoriums, guest-houses, or even saunas. Formal decisions were made in the Politburo, or in a ministerial collegium; but preliminary discussions took place in a more relaxed environment of the kind that these meeting-places provided. The cuisine was refined, the wines vintage; there were billiard tables, pianos, foreign newspapers and magazines, and tasteful paintings on the walls. These 'clubs of the Central Committee' were accessible only to a favoured few, with special rooms within them for the leadership itself; their clientele included ministers, lawyers, and factory managers as well as 'ambitious ballerinas, singers hoping to make the big time, and women whose only qualification was that they were young and beautiful'.<sup>50</sup> Apart from this there were special shops, holiday homes, and medical facilities, and hunting lodges where highly placed visitors could seek their prey—some, rather unsportingly, used heat-seeking missiles or helicopter gunships.<sup>51</sup> Brezhnev himself was a particularly keen hunter, and one whose success was also guaranteed: the boars at the Politburo's Zavidovo retreat were fattened up for a week before he arrived and readily approached the platform, but, just in case, an experienced huntsman would fire at the same time as the general secretary.<sup>52</sup>

The right to travel abroad, or to take advantage of the offer of hospitality from a fraternal party, was another form of privilege. This became much more common during the 1950s and later, as the USSR built up contacts abroad, and by the final

<sup>48</sup> G. A. Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie (1953–1985 gg.) Svidetel'stvo sovremennika* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1991), 260.

<sup>49</sup> Sobchak, *Khozhdienie*, 52 ('dynasties') and 53 ('caste'); the same term was used by Arbatov (*Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie*, 260). It was also argued that the ruling group constituted a 'new socialist nobility' (*Kommunist*, 9 (1990), 27). The suggestion that a bureaucratic and indirectly exploitative 'class' was in the process of formation was put forward by the sociologist Tat'iana Zaslavskaiia: see *Izvestiia*, 24 Dec. 1988, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Il'ia Zemtsov, *Chastnaia zhizn' sovetskoi elity* (London: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1986), 165–9; this account is based on interviews with Soviet émigrés in the USA and Israel that were conducted in 1977, 1981, and 1985.

<sup>51</sup> Boris Komarov, *The Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union* (London: Pluto, 1978), 88–9.

<sup>52</sup> Viktor Afanas'ev, *Chetvertaia vlast' i chetyre genseka* (Moscow: Kedr, 1994), 42–3. Iurii Churbanov insisted that his father in law had engaged in 'a genuine sporting hunt', but was present, by his own admission, on only one occasion (*la rasskazhu vse, kak bylo . . .*, 2nd edn. (Moscow: Nezavisimaia gazeta, 1993), 64). Iurii Korolev, who worked for more than 40 years in the Supreme Soviet apparatus, thought Brezhnev must have killed 'more than a hundred' elk, boar and deer in the course of his career (*Kremlevskii sovetnik* (Moscow: Olimp, 1995), 115). Brezhnev also enjoyed hunting abroad, including East Germany (for a photographic record see *Istochnik*, no. 4, 1996, pp. 109–14).



years a network of contacts had developed that can now be documented from the party archives. In 1990, for instance, the deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee, Karen Brutents, was allowed to visit Austria 'for a holiday', as well as for consultation with local comrades.<sup>53</sup> A whole group of party workers, with their wives and an interpreter, went off to Italy on the invitation of local Communists.<sup>54</sup> Another party worker and his wife, later in the year, were allowed to travel to Malta for a holiday at the invitation of the local Labour Party.<sup>55</sup> In October a Central Committee secretary and Politburo member, Alexander Dzasokhov, was off to Greece with his wife, and a separate group of leading comrades went to China, also 'for a holiday'.<sup>56</sup> The party archives contain details of many other detailed transactions on behalf of members of the elite, particularly accommodation: a flat was found for the retiring first secretary from Ul'ianovsk, Iurii Samsonov, and his family, and another for Central Committee member Valentin Kuptsov and his daughter.<sup>57</sup> There were parallel arrangements for the dietary requirements of the elite: in Kazakhstan in the 1980s, for instance, up to 30 per cent of all meat was distributed through 'closed channels' to which they alone had access;<sup>58</sup> and there were further arrangements for their reading, with a special list of 'forbidden' literature available to all Politburo and Secretariat members, and another to all members of the Central Committee.<sup>59</sup>

Party officials repeatedly rejected complaints that they enjoyed 'fantastic privileges'.<sup>60</sup> Gorbachev, speaking to the Italian press, called them 'so-called privileges', and insisted that the *absence* of injustice in Soviet society was such as to render it 'one of the most stable politically in the world'.<sup>61</sup> The only privilege they had, the Komi first secretary told the 19th Party Conference in 1988, was—with a few shameful exceptions—to work a twelve-to-fourteen-hour day without regard to their health or free time.<sup>62</sup> The average pay of a party official, wrote another of those concerned, was twenty-sixth in a list of comparable professions; and this for a fourteen-hour day, including weekends. Party officials, certainly, had their own

<sup>53</sup> TsKhSD, *fond 86, perechen'* 11, doc. 2, 12 July 1990.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 4, 21 Aug. 1990. <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 10, 11 Sept. 1990.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, doc. 16, 22 Oct. 1990, and *perechen'* 21, doc. 29, 4 Oct. 1990.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, *perechen'* 12, doc. 22, 26 Mar. 1990, and *perechen'* 11, doc. 24, 19 Apr. 1990.

<sup>58</sup> *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 11 Jan. 1987, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Korolev, *Kremlevskii sovetnik*, 242 (translations were prepared by Progress Publishers). Gorbachev was one of those who made 'ample use' of the facility to order books that was provided by the regular lists issued through the Central Committee (*Zbizn' i reformy*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), i. 171).

<sup>60</sup> As Vadim Bakatin put it ironically to the 19th Party Conference: *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzna 28 iunია–1 iulia 1988 goda. Stenograficheskie otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988), i. 99.

<sup>61</sup> M. S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988), 60.

<sup>62</sup> *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia*, i. 270 (V. I. Mel'nikov). A staff member from a party committee in the Moscow region wrote in similar terms to *Pravda*: 'the main privilege of an *instruktor*', as he put it, was to 'work 12 hours a day, often without days off' (6 June 1990, p. 4).

catering facilities, but there was nothing luxurious about them and the prices were the same as everywhere else. The special shop on Granovskii Street in central Moscow, which had served high-placed officials in the past, had been closed; and many, given the stresses of their work, suffered from heart and other circulatory diseases.<sup>63</sup> Party workers, an *instruktor* from the Moscow region explained to *Pravda*, earned no more than engineers, and they too had families. If the benefits were really so great, how was it that so few wished to take up a career of this kind?<sup>64</sup>

The strength of party and public feeling on the question of privilege was nonetheless such that a committee of investigation had to be set up, first by the newly elected Congress of People's Deputies and then, in 1990, by the 28th Party Congress. There was no need to be stingy in rewarding exceptional performance, the 19th Party Conference had been told: but there should be 'just one form of remuneration—the pay packet'.<sup>65</sup> Party members were particularly disturbed by the 'closed' character of the *nomenklatura* and the 'unhealthy attitudes of superiority and exclusivity' to which this gave rise.<sup>66</sup> Why not open more positions to non-members, it was suggested, so as to avoid the association between membership, career advancement, and privilege?<sup>67</sup> Why, wrote a labour veteran from Krasnodar, did the politically well-connected have more-comfortable flats, special hospitals, and even their own cemeteries?<sup>68</sup> Why, asked a speaker at the 19th Party Conference, was there a 'caste of untouchables' who were apparently to bear no direct responsibility for their misdemeanours during the Brezhnev years?<sup>69</sup> And why, asked a party member and mother of three children, could party officials not use the same shops, stand in the same queues, and rely on the same medicines if they got sick as she had to? In forty years she had never even seen a tourist resort, let alone the Black Sea. Why should party officials and their families enjoy it all?<sup>70</sup>

Anatolii Buzgalin, elected for the first time in 1990, was particularly impressed by the hall in which the Central Committee held its meetings. As he wrote after the first meeting he attended: 'The floor: inlaid marble and decorative parquet . . . Chandeliers: you couldn't call them anything but crystal waterfalls. The walls: marble, marble, marble . . .' The podium was especially remarkable, a 'monumental construction of Karelian birch, where Gorbachev alone presided'; ornamental workers and peasants, with what appeared to be expressions of surprise and concern, looked down from the alcoves. Buzgalin had visited the Winter Palace, the noble estates at Arkhangel'skoe and Kuskovo: but the Central Committee meeting room was not a museum or the former palace of tsars or landlords, and

<sup>63</sup> *Pravda*, 1 Aug. 1988, p. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 June 1990, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia*, i. 337 (G. I. Zagainov).

<sup>66</sup> *Kommunist*, no. 5, 1988, p. 42.

<sup>67</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 27, 1988, p. 10; similarly *Kommunist*, no. 3, 1988, p. 37.

<sup>68</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 17, 1988, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> *XIX Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia*, i. 277 (V. A. Starodubtsev).

<sup>70</sup> *Pravda*, 21 Mar. 1990, p. 3.

this in a country where many were still living in shared or communal flats, and where theatres and other cultural organizations were chronically short of public space. It had been built, admittedly, during the Brezhnev years or even earlier. But why not make it available to everyone, for instance, as a concert hall?<sup>71</sup>

The party elite, it emerged from other accounts, sometimes enjoyed an even wider range of special services. The Ukrainian party organization, for instance, operated a 'secret brothel reserved for the Central Committee'.<sup>72</sup> And Viktor Grishin, while chairman of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions in the 1960s, had arranged for the installation of a 'specially equipped massage parlour' with direct access from his office.<sup>73</sup> Privileges of this kind were rare, if the archive and oral testimony is any indication, but at various times there were conspicuous debauches in which party officials were prominently involved. At Smolensk in the late 1920s, in a particularly notorious case, a local restaurant became the scene of a drunken orgy lasting two days, with as many as eighty of the highest officials in the region among its active participants. On its opening day, according to the local procurator, a prostitute had been engaged to serve the guests. The deputy chairman of the local council, a Bolshevik since 1905, 'asserted his right to enjoy her favours first because of his party seniority'. The list of those involved in what eventually became known as the Smolensk Scandal was headed by the local first secretary—not a Central Committee member at this time—of whom it was said that he had a 'wife in every town in the *guberniia*'.<sup>74</sup>

There was a similar scandal in the 1970s, centred around the misappropriation of several hundred thousand rubles by the management of a tractor factory at Cheboksary, the capital of Chuvashia. Under the guise of building a bath-house for student summer workers, the factory director, chief engineer, and assistant personnel director had built themselves an elaborate private resort along the Volga river front staffed with pretty and compliant maids as well as guards and servants, all of whom they placed on the payroll. Official documents suggested that the bath-house was no more than a group of shower cabins for their student assistants, but it was in fact a luxurious sauna for the personal use of the factory's own managers, fitted out with marble and the finest kinds of rare hardwoods, where they held orgies at state expense. The premises were guarded by professional boxers and wrestlers, who were well rewarded for their services, and in addition there were three enormous wolfhounds. A Moscow journalist who tried to investigate for himself was knocked over and pinned down by one of the dogs; when he was released after an hour on the freezing ground he had to be taken straight to hos-

<sup>71</sup> A. V. Buzgalin, *Belaia vorona. Poslednii god zbizni TsK KPSS: Vzgliaid izvnutri* (Moscow: Tretii put', 1993), 77–9.

<sup>72</sup> Leonid Plyushch, *History's Carnival: A Dissident's Autobiography* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1979), 64.

<sup>73</sup> Zhores Medvedev, *Andropov: His Life and Death*, rev. edn. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 56.

<sup>74</sup> Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk under Soviet Rule* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 206–7 and 48–9, with additional detail from a procuracy report in the Smolensk Archive, WKP 250, pp. 6–7.

pital, suffering from frostbite. While he was there the buildings ‘accidentally’ burned down; the marble disappeared; and the remains were shoved into the river. It later emerged that this had been a facility not only for the benefit of local officials, but also for entertaining and if possible compromising much more important figures in the local and national leadership. The money, in a separate scandal, had come from the construction of a local railway line, which in fact had not been built at all although the documents to certify its completion had all been signed.<sup>75</sup>

The Gorbachev leadership was free of excesses of this kind, and indeed determined efforts were made to reassert the moral qualities that had always been a formal requirement of party membership. The general secretary himself, however, ensured that his Kremlin office was redecorated ‘almost every year’, and he arranged for the construction of several residences, including one at Foros in the Crimea in which he was detained during the attempted coup of August 1991. Not even the Tsar had lived so well, according to Mikhail Nenashev, the former head of state publishing; the Constitutional Court chairman, Valerii Zor’kin, called it ‘not a dacha or a castle, but a cyclopean edifice of otherworldly dimensions’.<sup>76</sup> It was a residence, recalled the editor of *Pravda*, of which ‘no emperor could ever have dreamed’, combining exceptional luxury with the ‘most modern technology, including satellite communications’. A special aerodrome had been built nearby; and so as not to trouble the residents with a walk to the sea (just forty or fifty metres away) there was an escalator—or even, other reports suggested, two escalators and a lift.<sup>77</sup> A group of journalists, rather later, was offered a closer look. They found an impressive construction on three storeys surrounded by an ‘administrative complex, a guest-house, kitchens, a garage, a boiler-house, an orangerie, a summer cinema, a swimming pool, a grotto, two beach-houses, a waterfall, fountains, a helicopter pad, a pier for motor launches, a solarium, and an escalator’, not to mention a botanical garden with more than a thousand different varieties of fruit.<sup>78</sup> The Gorbachevs’ domestic quarters in Moscow were equally

<sup>75</sup> The scandal was reported in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 12 May 1976, p. 12; additional details were provided in Arkadii Vaksberg’s subsequent account *The Soviet Mafia*, 80–5.

<sup>76</sup> M. F. Nenashev, *Zalozhnik vremeni* (Moscow: Progress/Kul’tura, 1993), 345; Zor’kin was quoted from *Literaturnaia gazeta*, no. 6, 1993, p. 10. According to a Western journalist, the main house reflected ‘the sort of opulence you see sometimes when a sheik moves into Beverley (sic) Hills’: David Remnick, *Lenin’s Tomb* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), 453. The costs of its construction—about \$20 million—were concealed in the budget of the Ministry of Defence: Valentin Pavlov, *Upushchen li shans? Finansovyi kluch k rynku* (Moscow: Terra, 1995), 31–2. The regular redecoration of Gorbachev’s Kremlin office is mentioned in M. S. Dokuchaev, *Moskva. Kreml’. Okbrana* (Moscow: Biznes-Press, 1995), 225, who also records the construction of a presidential residence at nearby Pitsunda.

<sup>77</sup> Afanas’ev, *Chevertaia vlast’*, 105; *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 38, 1994, p. 16 (the head of Gorbachev’s security staff, a KGB general, also recalled two escalators: Vladimir Medvedev, *Chelovек za spinoi* (Moscow: Russlit, 1994), 256). Gorbachev was interviewed in Foros by *Hello* magazine, issue 171, 28 Sept. 1991.

<sup>78</sup> *Izvestiia*, 8 Apr. 1994, p. 7. There were 13 such residences in the Caucasus, and another 11 in the Crimea (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 38, 1994, p. 16).

splendid: as one of Yeltsin's personal staff later recalled in awe, 'the bedrooms of French kings, famed for their luxury and wealth, would have paled into insignificance compared with Raisa Maksimovna's boudoir'.<sup>79</sup>

It was certainly clear to contemporaries that a significant change in the social character and even more in the moral character of the ruling group had taken place during the Brezhnev years, as the holders of power, 'no longer satisfied, as under Stalin, with just being powerful', began 'more and more widely to "exchange" their power for material benefits'.<sup>80</sup> Vladimir Tevosian, the son of a Central Committee member who had died during the Khrushchev years, was one of those who testified in our interviews to the change that had taken place by the late 1960s and 1970s. Under Stalin, with all the faults of the system that had existed at that time, Central Committee members had been 'believers, committed to an idea, talented and capable'. But, as Molotov had told his father, they were a 'very thin layer'; two or three rungs down the hierarchy were people who 'believed in nothing'. Most of these lower-level officials, as Tevosian recalled them, had been brought into the Central Committee by Khrushchev; those who joined under Brezhnev were even more materialistic. By contrast, Tevosian's own father, 'in spite of his high positions, gained nothing at all'. The Tevosians had been friendly with Rozaliia Zemliachka, a Central Committee member from 1939 until her death in 1947; she was another altruist who had given everything she had to the party, even a good apartment. The new people, by contrast, were more inclined to seek a personal advantage.

The same was true of family relationships. Marshal Vasilevskii, for instance, head of the General Staff after the war, shared the same staircase in the Tevosians' apartment building; a modest family, the Vasilevskii's 'had little to do with other *nomenklatura* members' and included ordinary people among their friends. Tevosian's sister Roza, in the event, attended the same architectural institute as Vasilevskii's son and married him; but this was without any manipulation on the part of their parents. On the contrary, neither family (at least in this account) made any effort to restrict their dealings to their 'own circle', or to make a 'good match' for their children; nor did Roza or Igor' Vasilevskii, later on, enjoy any direct support from their parents in making a career. Vladimir Tevosian himself continued to work in the same ministry and lived in a government house in central Moscow, but in the smallest flat that it contained. Before the Revolution it had been a rented property belonging to Count Sheremet'ev, and Khrushchev, Malenkov, Bulganin, Beria, Kosygin, and many others had lived in it; the largest flats, however, had been divided into smaller holdings. Another building of this kind, for senior

<sup>79</sup> Aleksandr Korzhakov, *Boris El'tsin: ot rassveta do zakata* (Moscow: Interbuk, 1997), 135. Gorbachev, Yeltsin wrote in the memoir he published at the time, 'likes to live splendidly, luxuriously, comfortably. He is assisted in this connection by his wife' (Boris El'tsin, *Ispoved' na zadannuiu temu* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990), 121).

<sup>80</sup> L. Gudkov *et al.*, 'Fenomen biurokratii v istoriko-sotsiologicheskoi perspektive', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, no. 6, 1989, p. 88.

Central Committee members, was on A. K. Tolstoi Street; it was this building that housed Mikhail Solomentsev, Dmitrii Ustinov, Alexander Shelepin, and other leading functionaries.<sup>81</sup>

For the children whose parents lived in these buildings there were special educational establishments: for instance, School No. 12, near the famous 'House on the Embankment' at 2 Serafimovich Street, in which senior officials had lived since the early 1930s,<sup>82</sup> and whose enrolment came either from senior levels of the government or from members of the writers' union (which also maintained a residence in the vicinity). There were other schools of this kind: School 19 and School 110 in central Moscow, and a school near the new building of the Moscow Arts Theatre which was attended by the children of Moscow party secretary Viktor Grishin and Khrushchev's grandson. Some, like Malenkov's son, an anti-communist and religious believer, had little to do with other *nomenklatura* families; others, like the son of the former deputy minister responsible for the tank industry, were very different, marrying the daughter of the head of the political administration of the armed forces and delighting in the number of Japanese tea services they possessed ('their flat', as Tevosian recalled it, 'was full of junk'). A former ambassador and Central Committee member who lived near the Tevosians was another 'corrupted element', enjoying regular home deliveries of gifts from his foreign as well as domestic counterparts. Under Brezhnev this had become a well-established practice, so much so (according to Tevosian) that wives of the leadership would ask what they were likely to receive on their provincial visits before they left Moscow.<sup>83</sup>

Members of the Central Committee and of the ruling elite were nonetheless a varied group, and they rarely interacted socially. Mikoian's son Stepan, for instance, had attended the same school as Zhdanov's son Iurii, but the families never visited each other; there was a little tennis with the family of Andrei Andreev during the summer, but when they called at Kaganovich's dacha it was 'just for a few minutes', with the children ordered to remain in the car.<sup>84</sup> Brezhnev himself led a 'fairly isolated life' and rarely invited visitors to his dacha; when he needed to consult it was usually over dinner with Andropov, Gromyko, Ustinov, and Chernenko (his 'faithful Sancho Panza'), after members of his own family had withdrawn; Kosygin was never a visitor on such occasions, nor was the rather more junior Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>85</sup> Members of the leadership, however, had

<sup>81</sup> V. I. Tevosian interview, May 1993, Soviet Elite Project (SEP). Tevosian's father, Ivan Tevosian, was a full Central Committee member between 1939 and his death in 1958.

<sup>82</sup> F. L. Kurlat, *Moskva: putevoditel'* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1989), 200. It was this building that formed the subject of Iurii Trifonov's novel *House on the Embankment*; its history is explored in *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 4, 1995, p. 13, and in *Argumenty i fakty—Moskva*, no. 6, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>83</sup> Tevosian interview, SEP.

<sup>84</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 33, 1995, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Churbanov, *Ia rasskazhu*, 75–8, 84. The reference to Sancho Panza is from N. I. Ryzhkov, *Desiat' let velikikh potriasenii* (Moscow: Kniga, prosveshchenie, miloserdie, 1995), 56. Viktor Grishin recalled Shcherbitskii, Andropov, Gromyko, Ustinov, and Kunaev as Brezhnev's 'closest friends' in the

ceased to visit each other entirely by the later stages of his rule, by which time the question of 'who drinks with whom' had become 'openly political';<sup>86</sup> indeed, there were firm conventions that were designed to prevent such visits so as to avoid the impression of a 'conspiracy', even if their dachas were adjoining or their flats on the same landing.<sup>87</sup> Gorbachev, for instance, had invited Andropov and his wife to dinner when he became a Politburo member in 1979, hoping to continue the friendly relations they had enjoyed in Stavropol'; but Andropov had firmly declined, pointing out that otherwise the gossip would 'begin tomorrow: Who? Where? Why? What did they discuss?'<sup>88</sup>

Gorbachev had studied with Supreme Soviet chairman Anatolii Luk'ianov at Moscow University and shared responsibilities within the university Komsomol, but they were never visitors to each other's homes;<sup>89</sup> Gorbachev, in fact, had few friends, at least in his years as general secretary, and (according to the testimony of his chief of staff) 'avoided everyone's company'. Politburo and Secretariat members, for instance, used to assemble once a year on New Year's Day, but they were 'stiff, formal affairs, rather like Politburo meetings, only with wives and champagne glasses', and many 'did their best to stay away'.<sup>90</sup> Gorbachev, equally, made at most two visits to the home of prime minister Ryzhkov.<sup>91</sup> The president, others testified, had 'no friends, and did not know the feeling of comradeship';<sup>92</sup> the Gorbachevs 'admitted no one to their family circle' and had no friends among the party and government leadership, 'not to speak of ordinary people'.<sup>93</sup> Mrs Gorbachev created a particularly unfortunate public impression by her large wardrobe and her tendency to address others *de*

Politburo (V. V. Grishin, *Ot Khrushcheva do Gorbacheva. Politicheskie portrety piati gensekov i A. N. Kosygina. Memuary* (Moscow: Askol, 1996), 41). Vladimir Medvedev, who headed the general secretary's security staff, recalled Ustinov, Gromyko, Andropov, Chernenko, Tikhonov, Kulakov, and Kirilenko among visitors to the Zavidovo dacha, but at this level there were no friends, rather 'colleagues, associates' (*Che lovek za spinoi*, 129).

<sup>86</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 24, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Ryzhkov, *Desiat' let*, 39.

<sup>88</sup> Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, i. 189 (from that time onwards, Gorbachev recalled, they had visited old friends but not Politburo or Secretariat colleagues). Andropov, on the basis of other accounts, was in any case isolated and unsociable (Grishin, *Ot Khrushcheva*, 62). As Jerry Hough has pointed out, the consequence of a policy that discouraged social links within the leadership was that associations tended to develop on the basis of a common career or institutional background (*Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985-1991* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1997), 87).

<sup>89</sup> *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 Oct. 1991, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> V. I. Boldin, *Krusenie p'edestala. Stribiki k portretu M. S. Gorbacheva* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995), 365. Anatolii Dobrynin, the long-serving ambassador to Washington and then a member of the Central Committee Secretariat, found that there were 'no personal friendships among the Soviet leaders, neither did their families maintain close contact' (*In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 618 (this passage is not included in the Russian edition, published in 1997)).

<sup>91</sup> Ryzhkov, *Desiat' let*, 40.

<sup>92</sup> Korolev, *Kremlevskii sovetnik*, 291.

<sup>93</sup> Dokuchaev, *Moskva. Krem'l'*, 226. Jonathan Steele, *Eternal Russia: Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and the Mirage of Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), also noted Gorbachev's 'inability to make close friends' (p. 33).

*haut en bas* and with pauses between each phrase, as if she was speaking through an interpreter.<sup>94</sup>

Former prime minister Nikolai Ryzkhov, for his part, was asked if there was any kind of 'men's club' within the late Soviet leadership. There was nothing of the kind, he replied. Relationships were purely professional; there were no collective visits to the bath-house, or drinking sessions; and there were no social visits at other times. All of this was an established practice, Ryzkhov suggested, even before Gorbachev's accession, in order to avoid informal 'blocs' or alliances within the leadership.<sup>95</sup> When he had asked, on being appointed to the Secretariat in 1985, if there was any socializing on New Year's Eve, he was told to 'forget it'.<sup>96</sup> Ryzkhov's wife, with other Politburo spouses, was periodically invited by Raisa Gorbachev to social occasions at which there might be specially arranged lectures on the icon painting of Andrei Rublev or on Soviet-Chinese relations. Gatherings of this kind took place about every two months; almost all the wives of the leadership attended, but not all of them felt at ease as Mrs Gorbachev 'conducted herself like a schoolmistress', putting forward elementary propositions as if they were a revelation. Tea was drunk, sometimes a dry wine, but these curious meetings were 'worse than hard work' because of the 'tense atmosphere' in which they took place.<sup>97</sup>

There were divisions of a different kind at the level of the Central Committee elite between 'ministers' and 'secretaries', or (in effect) between government officials who associated themselves with prime minister Kosygin and party officials who had closer relations with the general secretary. Nikolai Baibakov, chief planner throughout the Brezhnev years, had much in common with the views of the Soviet premier and lived in the same apartment building on the Lenin Hills. Kosygin, however, lived an 'isolated life' and never invited Baibakov to make a home visit, apparently thinking him a 'Brezhnevite' although he and Kosygin took the same view on matters of state policy. On the other hand, Baibakov never made an appearance in the party headquarters without the Soviet premier, and Brezhnev was inclined to regard him as a 'Kosyginist'. Relations between the two leaders were often difficult: strong-willed and ambitious, Brezhnev was nonetheless aware of his lack of competence in economic matters and resented Kosygin's authority in this area. Brezhnev was familiar with his own trusted associates, and enjoyed their praise; in turn, they did their best to cut short any discussion in which Kosygin was involved and in which the general secretary was likely to be at a disadvantage. The Soviet premier left meetings of this kind 'shaking with rage'.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Medvedev, *Chelovek za spinoi*, 218–19. <sup>95</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no 15, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Vladimir Dolgikh quoted in Ryzkhov, *Desiat' let*, 38–9. There were occasional exceptions to this rule, such as the receptions that were held in the government dacha at Novo-Ogarevo: see Dokuchaev, *Moskva*, 224.

<sup>97</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 17, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> N. K. Baibakov, *Sorok let v pravitel'stve* (Moscow: Respublika, 1993), 252–3. Similar tensions were noted by many others, including Brezhnev's foreign policy advisor A. M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, *Ot*



Relations were no more cordial between Brezhnev and head of state Podgornyi, as soon as he began to object to the excessive praise that began to be heaped upon the party leader ('We don't need two general secretaries,' Brezhnev's intimates expostulated, and Podgornyi was forced out of his state position in 1977).<sup>99</sup> Nikolai Ryzhkov experienced the same kind of tensions when, in 1985, he left the Central Committee Secretariat to take up the position of prime minister: immediately he became 'not one of us' (*ne nash*) for his former colleagues.<sup>100</sup>

Divisions notwithstanding, there was a widespread perception inside as well as outside the party that too many of its leading officials had 'for some time been living under communism',<sup>101</sup> and it was this concern that was addressed by the commission on privileges that reported to the Central Committee in December 1990. In fact, explained its chairman, enterprise director Iurii Peskov, only a 'small proportion' of party members, 'above all the leadership', had enjoyed benefits such as an office car, recreational facilities, or medical attention, and there had been sharp reductions in all privileges of this kind during the course of *perestroika*. The allocation of high-standard housing to senior officials had been ended by a decision of the Central Committee in 1989, and there had been comparable and far-reaching changes in the provision of dachas or country houses. Only five party organizations, in fact, had ever owned them (these included Moscow and Leningrad), and their leading officials had not been allowed to acquire dachas or allotments that were in their private ownership. The Fourth Main Administration of the Ministry of Health, which used to look after senior officials and other dignitaries, had been abolished altogether; many of the party's twenty-three sanatoriums had been given to other institutions, and those that remained had been made available to the population at large, including Chernobyl victims.

There were changes in transport arrangements as well. Members of the Politburo had been allocated Volga cars for their personal use, not the more impressive Chaikas and Zils of the recent past, and others would have to take the first car that was available. The Belorussian party had employed a tailor and bootmaker at its offices in Minsk, but they had now been transferred to other duties. Central Committee members and the leadership more specifically had been able to order books through party headquarters, but all operations of this kind were on

*Kollontai do Gorbacheva* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1994), 257–60; Grishin, *Ot Khrushcheva*, 39–40, 76–7; and Dokuchaev, *Moskva*, 182–5. Churbanov, again in a minority, thought Brezhnev had 'fairly good relations' with the Soviet premier (*Ia rasskazhu*, p. 78). Nikolai Egorychev, who shared the general view that Brezhnev was 'very jealous' of Kosygin, thought it stemmed from the Soviet premier's popularity among ordinary people and not just the party membership (*Neizvestnaia Rossiia*, 301). Kosygin refused to go drinking with Brezhnev and annoyed him in other ways, recalled Mikhail Smirtiukov, formerly head of chancellery at the USSR Council of Ministers. Brezhnev was unable to get rid of Kosygin as he would lose his last capable administrator; even so, there were 'several times' when the Soviet premier was on the verge of being dismissed (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 24, 1995, p. 7).

<sup>99</sup> Grishin, *Ot Khrushcheva*, 42–3.

<sup>100</sup> Ryzhkov, *Desiat' let*, 114.

<sup>101</sup> G. A. Pershin quoted in *Pravda*, 9 July 1990, p. 3.

a commercial basis and involved no subsidy; the same was true of the catering facilities in party offices, and the foodstuffs they used were obtained from ordinary sources of supply. Orders of foodstuffs for anniversaries and special occasions were the same as in other workplaces, 'only the selection is much more limited'. The salaries of party officials, which had somewhat controversially been raised, had simply been adjusted to reflect the rates that were being paid in other forms of employment. The party, thought Peskov, should propose an amendment to the Constitution banning illegal privileges, and should extend its own enlightened practices to the wider society. What remained, for Peskov, was simply a 'normal existence' to which party officials—like their counterparts in other occupations—were properly entitled.<sup>102</sup>

Members of the party elite in the late Soviet period were very conscious themselves of the limited nature of any advantages they might enjoy. The rates of pay, for a start, were often lower than they would have enjoyed in comparable occupations, and there were no 'envelopes' with additional payments of the kind that had existed in the Stalinist years. It was certainly easier to obtain a flat, and there were some who took up party work for this reason. But they were a small minority of the clients of the Fourth Division of the Ministry of Health, which also looked after government officials, academicians, and actors; and although the buffet in party headquarters was better than average, the prices were the same as everywhere else. For some, indeed, it was the relative freedom of action at leading levels of the party that was their main 'privilege'.<sup>103</sup> Membership of the Central Committee, in fact, conveyed few real advantages of itself; privileges were a function of position, and position in turn gave rise to privileges, including the right to build their own dachas and even the acquisition of a private automobile. When Vitalii Vorotnikov was a regional first secretary in Krasnodar, with a family of five and a non-working wife, they 'hadn't starved' but bought things 'very carefully'; the only privilege to which he had access was a holiday entitlement at a concessionary rate.<sup>104</sup> Membership of the Central Committee 'provided nothing at all', recalled Viktor Mishin; the dining and medical facilities that he enjoyed were provided for him as a member of the Komsomol Secretariat, and if he had been the head of a secondary school he would have received nothing at all.<sup>105</sup>

Public opinion, in fact, was reasonably discriminating in the attitude it took to the privileges that were enjoyed by leading officials in the party and outside it. In the first published survey of its kind, in 1988, there was considerable support for chauffeured automobiles (42 per cent) and special arrangements for obtaining

<sup>102</sup> *Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS 10–11 dekabria 1990 g.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1991), 86–95. A secret circular of August 1990 had by this time withdrawn the automatic right to a Moscow flat that had been enjoyed by republican and regional party leaders (N. A. Zer'kovich, *TsK zakryt, vse u shli . . . Ochen' lichnaia Kniga* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 1999), pp. 19–20).

<sup>103</sup> Vitalii Vrublevskii, *Vladimir Shcherbitskii: pravda i vymysli* (Kiev: Dovira, 1993), 111.

<sup>104</sup> V. I. Vorotnikov interview, May 1993, SEP.

<sup>105</sup> V. M. Mishin interview, June 1993, SEP.

airline or railway tickets (36 per cent); but more than two-thirds thought there was no reason to provide 'superior apartments in prestige districts', and an overwhelming 84 per cent thought it was wrong to allow closed shops or buffets. There were differences, as well, in public perceptions of the groups that could legitimately be assisted in this way: there was very general agreement that the privileges of the national leadership were deserved, and equally clear agreement that the privileges of trade-union and Komsomol leaders were not deserved, with more divided views about the legitimacy of the privileges of middle-ranking party officials.<sup>106</sup> A larger national survey conducted in 1990, however, found a less tolerant view, with 68 per cent of the opinion that 'there should be no privileges of any kind other than benefits for those in need', and 49 per cent of the view that the greatest injustice involved in privileges was that 'ordinary people live worse and worse, but the authorities can protect themselves against such difficulties'.<sup>107</sup>

Valid or otherwise, attitudes of this kind contributed to a series of defeats at the ballot box—first at the national level in 1989, and then in the republics the following year—that placed the party's future and the material position of its leading officials in some doubt. And ironically, they played a part of some importance in encouraging officials to look wherever they could for a better means of protecting their material position. At least until the final years, there were all kinds of safeguards to prevent the formation of an exploitative as well as a politically dominant group, and leading officials found they had to surrender even minor possessions when they left office. 'They are not your pillows, comrade,' Dmitrii Polianskii was told after he had been forced to resign as a first deputy prime minister in the early 1970s: 'They belong to the Central Committee.'<sup>108</sup> Viktor Grishin, for many years the party first secretary in Moscow, was required to prove his identity when he came to collect a new pension book in 1992 and had a heart attack, dying before he recovered consciousness.<sup>109</sup> An elite that was sure of its continuing dominance had no need to make its position permanent in other ways, and could even afford a relative asceticism. An elite whose position was in danger had every reason to reach out for the security of private property, and (as we shall see in the next chapter) to use that property to carry its dominance forward into the post-communist years.

<sup>106</sup> *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 27, 1988, p. 10 (a Moscow telephone poll, n=548).

<sup>107</sup> VTsIOM, *Obshchestvennoe mnenie v tsifrakh*, vyp. 13(20), May 1990, pp. 11, 12 (the survey was conducted in April 1990 with a sample of 2,708).

<sup>108</sup> Kevin Klose, *Russia and the Russians: Inside the Closed Society* (New York: Norton, 1984), 271.

<sup>109</sup> Anatolii Gromyko, *Andrei Gromyko. V labirintakh Kremliia* (Moscow: Avtor, 1997), 100.

## 8 | An Evolving Elite

In our leading body, the Central Committee of our Party, which directs all our Soviet and Party organizations, there are about seventy [full] members. Among these seventy members of the Central Committee are our best industrial leaders, our best co-operative leaders, our best managers of supplies, our best military men, our best propagandists and agitators, our best experts on state farms, on collective farms, on individual peasant farms, our best experts on the nations constituting the Soviet Union and on nationalities policy. In this areopagus is concentrated the wisdom of our party.

Stalin, Interview with Emil Ludwig, 1931

We who served the Central Committee of the CPSU were very different from the post-*perestroika* nomenklaturists (and it is not for them to judge us!) . . . The system we served robbed the people for the sake of ideology and militarism. But unlike the majority of contemporary nomenklaturists, at least we did not steal.

A. S. Cherniaev, 1995

In the earlier chapters of this book we have considered the Soviet elite and their political influence through a series of chronological periods: the Revolution and Civil War, early and late Stalinism, the Second World War, renewal under Khrushchev, stagnation under Brezhnev, and then renewal but at the cost of widening divisions and eventual collapse under Mikhail Gorbachev. And yet we gain an adequate understanding of the role of the elite not simply through their composition and interaction at particular times: we also need to know about the extent of change over the whole course of Soviet rule. As we saw in Chapter 7, it was a steadily ageing elite, one that was younger, before the war, than the society it sought to lead, but older than the society and the party as a whole in the post-war years. It was disproportionately male, but more highly educated than the mass of the party membership and the delegates at party congresses; it was more likely to be village-born, in a society that had become predominantly urban by the 1960s, and over the whole period it was disproportionately Russian.

Throughout this book we have emphasized generations, not simply age cohorts; and in this final chapter we consider the flow of each of our four

generations through the political elite that was defined until almost the end of the Soviet period by membership of the party's Central Committee. Our first generation, born in the last decades of the nineteenth century, were the 'professional revolutionaries' who had joined the Bolshevik Party while it was in opposition or even illegal, and who moved into leading positions after October 1917; many of them, as foreign minister Chicherin complained, had some difficulty adjusting to the fact that they spoke for an established government and 'not a revolutionary party far from power'.<sup>1</sup> Our second generation, born in the first decades of the new century, had come to adulthood with the Soviet system already in place, and it was to the new regime that they owed their—often rapid—career advancement; for them, it was a system that had 'won the war', and one that had brought stability and higher living standards in the 1960s and 1970s. Our third generation, born after 1920, were mostly too young to have fought in the war, but it was the generation that was politicized by the de-Stalinization that took place at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, and which in turn provided the driving force behind *perestroika* in the 1980s (indeed, it was Gorbachev's own generation).

Our first task, in this final chapter, is to consider the flow of generations through the political elite from the first generation of undergrounders to the fourth generation, born after 1940, who were beginning to establish their position as the regime came to an end. We also look forward to the transition from party monopoly to the post-communist 1990s. The Central Committee had ceased to function after the summer of 1991; but its members had constituted the Soviet elite for more than seventy years, and were not necessarily inclined to surrender their position in the course of a complex process of transition that they themselves had initiated. Unlike most other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, communist rule in Russia was not defeated at the ballot box or overthrown by a popular movement; it had established some measure of legitimacy through its wartime leadership as well as through the social and economic changes it had sponsored, and the post-communist leadership was headed by a former member of the Politburo, not a political prisoner like Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia, Jozsef Antall in Hungary, or Lech Walesa and the Solidarity leadership in Poland. How many members of the outgoing elite, in these special circumstances, retained a position of influence in post-communist Russia? Was there a circulation of elites, or a more far-reaching replacement of elites? And what was the relationship between elite change and the introduction of private ownership throughout the formerly state-run economy?

## The Elite in History

*Animal Farm*, George Orwell's influential fable of Soviet power, provides many insights into the Russian Revolution and its consequences. It is partly

<sup>1</sup> *Kommunisticheskii internatsional*, no. 6, Nov. 1919, col. 825.

about 'elite formation', how the elite of clever pigs who led the revolution changed over time into Mr Jones and his workers, the humans they had originally overthrown.<sup>2</sup> Of course Orwell's perspective was from 1945, before even the midpoint of the Soviet experience, but the privileges won later by the elite, especially under Brezhnev, are entirely consistent with his account. From the very beginning, as we suggested in Chapter 7, there was a personal weakness on the part of individual revolutionaries, a greed for power and sometimes for material advantages. This weakness became even more apparent in later years. But such an explanation for the development of the Soviet elite is not sufficient.

A broader and more common explanation for the particular development of the Soviet elite is evolutionary and generational. This explanation is based not so much on individual psychology (or personal shortcomings), as upon a changing society and its needs. The people in the elite changed, and the behaviour of the elite changed, because the situation had changed. Different types of elite were needed at different times. One version of this moves from Orwell to Darwin. At an early stage—after the seizure of power in October 1917 and especially during the Civil War of 1918–20—a process of natural selection identified those members of the elite whose abilities and personalities were better suited to administration rather than to underground subversion.<sup>3</sup> Trotsky's influential explanation, especially in *The Revolution Betrayed*, has much in common with this, although it involved degeneration rather than evolution: the failure of communism to expand beyond Soviet borders led to the Old Guard being overwhelmed by a peasant-based 'bureaucracy', with Stalin as its leading representative.<sup>4</sup>

The sociologists and political scientists who pondered the communist experience in the 1950s, two decades after Trotsky and a decade after Orwell, made much more of economic modernization. For the modernization or developmental school it took one kind of person to build a mass movement and another to build a factory. '[I]f the modernization process [wa]s to come to a successful conclusion', it was suggested, 'those intellectuals who spoke so brilliantly of its necessity and who produced the party that set the process in motion w[ould] have

<sup>2</sup> George Orwell, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1995). This fiftieth anniversary (illustrated) edition reprints a preface Orwell wrote for a 1947 émigré Ukrainian edition with the following passage (p. 178): 'Since 1930 I had seen little evidence that the USSR was progressing towards anything that one could truly call Socialism. On the contrary, I was struck by clear signs of its transformation into a hierarchical society, in which the rulers had no more reason to give up their power than any other ruling class. Moreover, the workers and intelligentsia in a country like England cannot understand that the USSR of today is altogether different from what it was in 1917 . . . [B]eing accustomed to comparative freedom and moderation in public life, totalitarianism is completely incomprehensible to them.'

<sup>3</sup> Four historians who have taken this view are Robert V. Daniels, Moshe Lewin, Werner Mosse, and Mark von Hagen. See pp. 10–11, 19 above.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 8, 50–1, 259–60.

to be devoured by the managerial gravediggers they [had] created.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation is different from what we have seen so far, in that it encompasses a longer period of time and more far-reaching change. Elite change, in this interpretation, was due not to personal corruption or a hunger for power in itself, nor was it a case of the survival of the fittest within the same generation of Old Bolsheviks. What was involved was the wholesale replacement of one generation of leaders by another. Industrialization, coupled with Stalin's administrative requirements, were the causal factors in the recruitment of a 'new class' in another influential work, by Milovan Djilas.<sup>6</sup>

These interpretations all contribute to an explanation, but they contain elements of mutual inconsistency. Which event, for example, transformed the Soviet elite, the Civil War, or the Five Year Plans? If the hard-nosed administrators came to the fore in the Civil War, why did they allow themselves to be outmanoeuvred and purged in 1937–8? On the other hand, why in the long run did the 'managerial gravediggers' of the Brezhnev generation turn out to be poor managers, unable to sustain a viable economy beyond the 1980s? In addition, both of these explanations of the development of the Soviet elite, which may broadly be described as 'functional', leave out other influential factors. Such factors operated both above and below the level of the political elite that was represented in the Central Committee. One of them was the very ideology of Leninism, which stressed a 'vanguard party' made up of professional revolutionaries who were by definition distinct from the masses—not least through their possession of a higher level of political consciousness. There was also the 'political' role of individuals within this system, men like Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev, who had their own objectives and who could to a greater or lesser extent influence the composition of the elite through their control over the selection process. There was also the changing nature of the society from which the elite were ultimately drawn. And finally there were biological factors—infirmity and death.

If we think about the careers of the nearly 2,000 people who formed the Central Committee-level elite over the entire period of Soviet rule, how far can these various elements be reconciled? Tables 8.1 and 8.2 show the long-term generational change of the elite, and the changing 'turnover' rate. Twentieth-century Russia, as these changes make clear, has experienced three elite revolutions. The year 1917 effectively eliminated the elite of tsarist Russia and put Bolshevik revolutionaries in its place. As we saw in Chapter 1, they included both an intelligentsia and a plebeian element—men like Krestinskii and Andreev

<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Donaldson and Derek J. Waller, 'Stasis and Change in Revolutionary Elites: A Comparative Analysis of the 1956 Party Central Committees in China and the USSR', *Sage Professional Paper: Comparative Politics Series*, No. 01–011 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1970), 623 f.

<sup>6</sup> Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1957), esp. 49.

**Table 8.1.** Generational breakdown of CC members, 1917–1990

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Birthdate not known	Total
1917	29	0	0	0	0	29
1934	137	2	0	0	0	139
1939	66	64	0	0	9	139
1952	62	166	1	0	7	236
1971	10	281	105	0	0	396
1976	4	267	155	0	0	426
1981	4	219	242	5	0	470
1986	1	81	379	16	0	477
1990	0	2	225	185	0	412

*Note:* First generation born before 1901, second generation born 1901–20, third generation born 1921–40, fourth generation born after 1940.

**Table 8.2.** Turnover of CC members, 1918–1990

Year	Congress	Turnover (%)	ATR (%)
1918	7th	41	70
1920	9th	26	24
1924	13th	10	10
1927	15th	14	7
1930	16th	16	6
1934	17th	33	9
1939	18th	83	16
1952	19th	53	5
1956	20th	40	12
1961	22nd	50	9
1976	25th	20	4
1986	27th	45	9
1990	28th	88	20

*Note:* Turnover for a given congress is measured as a percentage of CC full members and candidates elected at the previous congress who were not re-elected. Not all congresses are shown in the table; the turnover for the 1920 congress, for example, is based on a comparison with the 1919 congress (not shown), not with 1918. The annual turnover rate (ATR) is based on turnover percentage divided by time between congresses (measured as whole months).



respectively, from among the individual members of the elite that we have considered in earlier chapters. Probably as important, however, were two other ‘historical’ features. First of all, although the new rulers were arguably more representative of the population of Russia than the gentry-based tsarist elite had been, they were a *closed* elite. For the most part only members of the tiny pre-revolutionary Bolshevik faction (be they intellectuals or plebeians, leaders or rank-and-file party members) would hold posts at Central Committee level in the two decades after the Revolution; some exceptions, like Trotsky or Liubchenko, had belonged to other small radical groups. Secondly, these people were young. They belonged mostly to our first generation, born after 1880 and coming to maturity before the First World War.

The problem was not that the members of this new revolutionary elite were thrust aside—at least not for two decades. Rather, the problem was the opposite, that they stayed on in power. There were changes above and below the level of the Central Committee elite. Lenin’s poor health had obliged him to withdraw from the dominant position within the party leadership by 1922, and after a period of top-level struggle Stalin replaced him. Soviet society, meanwhile, was subject to a series of different experiences: the radical policies of the Civil War years, economic relaxation under the New Economic Policy, an even more radical upheaval at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. The number of urban residents increased at the same time from 18 per cent of the population in 1925 to 33 per cent in 1939 (and on to 48 per cent in 1961). The characteristics of rank-and-file party members—and of the lower-level party leadership—also changed dramatically. The party expanded, and much has been made of the ‘Lenin levy’ of 1924, inspired by the death of the party leader at the start of that year, when a deliberate attempt was made to boost its rank-and-file membership, particularly by recruiting those who could claim proletarian origin.

The political elite that was concentrated in the Central Committee did not change to the same extent. Only a minority of oppositionists or otherwise refractory comrades—like Krestinskii—were removed in the 1920s or early 1930s. The early Stalinist elite (the Central Committee members who had been elected between 1923 and 1934) contained a substantial number of long-serving members of the revolutionary elite of 1917–22; Andreev was only one example. Even the ‘new entrants’ to the Central Committee after 1922, men like Vareikis and Liubchenko, had the same pre-revolutionary credentials and first-generation background; and as late as the 1930s the ‘old guard’ were still men in their early middle age (in 1937 Bukharin was 49, Vareikis 43, and Liubchenko 40). This group was remarkably cohesive; it was hard for a leader to manipulate, and for outsiders—younger people, or older ones who had not been Old Bolsheviks—to become part of it. This era was the twenty-year dictatorship of an elite, effectively of the small pre-revolutionary Leninist faction of the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party. The ruling cohort could not be renewed—either to guarantee

Stalin's power or to introduce a Soviet-trained elite—without getting rid of a very large proportion of its members at one blow. That, in a sense, is what the Purges were about. Without such an extraordinary mechanism of turnover this revolutionary first generation, born for the most part in the 1880s and 1890s and members of a national elite in their early thirties, might have stayed in control of the country until the end of their working lives. (Gorbachev, as we have seen, achieved the same objective more peacefully in the late 1980s, but he was dealing with colleagues who were near retirement age, and he did it in a radically different political environment.)

The Purges, then, were Russia's second elite revolution. But rather than resolving the generation problem of 1917, they simply reformulated it. Another chronologically narrow cohort of young men, our second generation, born in the first decades of the new century, were given responsible posts at the end of the 1930s and the 1940s as they became members of the late Stalinist elite. Brezhnev (born in 1906) entered the Central Committee as late as 1952, but others of his generation, like Aleksei Kosygin or Mikhail Suslov, were pre-war entrants. Among the individuals to whom we have given particular attention in this book, Patolichev was a 1939 entrant (at the age of 31); Baibakov reached an elite post during the war, and the Central Committee itself in 1952 (at the age of 41). As the developmental school have pointed out, many members of this new elite were different in important respects from their predecessors. They had a particular kind of education and administrative experience; and as we have seen in Chapter 7, they were more representative of the population and of the party rank and file than the old elite had been. The late Stalinist elite was also larger, and at least initially it was more open than the revolutionary elite and the early Stalinist elite had been.

The post-1937 elite of the second generation was more specialized—there were clearer divisions between ministers, party secretaries, and generals—but in the end it proved at least as cohesive as the Old Bolsheviks. The second generation gradually became more conscious of itself as a group, and it became increasingly confident after the achievements of industrialization and the 1945 victory. It would have longer to entrench itself in power than the first generation had; its members grew older together, and there was no mass removal, at least not for nearly fifty years. The Khrushchev elite and even the Brezhnev elite came from the same milieu. In the years between the Purges and the 1980s there were changes in the top leadership and in the policies they were promoting, but the elite as a whole survived. There were relatively high turnover rates under Khrushchev (50 per cent in 1961), as well as a steady growth in the size of the Central Committee (from 236 in 1952 to 330 in 1961), but the first secretary was dipping into a pool of individuals who came from roughly the same age cohort. Although Khrushchev tried to make the system work more effectively, the only raw material he had to work with were the men of the second generation, who were

still in early middle age; the ‘children of the 20th Congress’ were too young. Those who joined the elite under Khrushchev—among them Zhurin (born in 1908, 48 in 1956), and Nuriev and Novikov (born, respectively, in 1915 and 1907, 46 and 54 in 1961)—were near-contemporaries of the late Stalinist *vydvizhentsy*, and they had similar backgrounds and attitudes. The same was true of the early Brezhnev years; even where there was turnover the new posts were often filled by second-generation men like Vsevolozhskii (born in 1917 and 49 in 1966) or Gorchakov (born in 1917 and 54 in 1971), although they had achieved elite status later than the original ‘class of ’38’—after the late 1930s and indeed after 1945. As had been the case under Khrushchev, ‘fresh blood’ of this kind frequently represented not replacement but the addition of holders of the expanding range of posts that had come to carry *ex officio* membership. Departures were few. Egorychev, dropped from the Central Committee in 1971 for offending Brezhnev, was the exception that proved the rule, and even he was given a compensatory ambassadorship (although not one that carried Central Committee status); a few more, like Zhurin, fell victim to genuine ill health.

This second generation represented the best and the worst of the ‘stability of cadres’ that Brezhnev had made a watchword of his general secretaryship (it was under Brezhnev that Central Committee turnover dropped to its lowest ever rate—20 per cent in 1976).<sup>7</sup> Of course, the low turnover rates at party congresses were not the cause of stagnation but its symptom. Individuals occupied high-level posts in the party or government for long periods, and these posts automatically involved Central Committee membership. Among those we have considered directly, Nuriev and Novikov were deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers for twelve and fifteen years respectively, Pervyshin spent seventeen years in similar ministries, Baibakov headed Gosplan for twenty years, and Patolichev was in the same ministry for twenty-seven years. Zhurin led regions for fifteen years, Dobrik for eighteen, and Vsevolozhskii a single region for nineteen years. In the armed forces things were little different, with General Gorchakov spending fourteen years in his Strategic Rocket Forces post.

It was hardly surprising that Brezhnev gave no thought to elite renewal. Such renewal was at first—in the mid 1960s—not functionally necessary. Khrushchev’s fall showed the value of cultivating the elite by broadening it, and keeping it content. And this was the first time for many years that the leader of the party and the bulk of the Central Committee had been from the same—second—generation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Strictly speaking, turnover was lower at some of the congresses in the 1920s—as low as 11% in 1924—but those were annual conferences; Brezhnev’s were five years apart. The *annual* turnover rate (ATR) was 4% in 1976, compared to 10% in 1924.

<sup>8</sup> Arguably Brezhnev was the only top Soviet leader who came from the same generation as the bulk of the Central Committee. If the first generation is taken to be those born between 1881 to 1900 (to take a 20-year band), both Lenin and Stalin were born before this (in 1870 and 1879—possibly 1878—respectively). Stalin was certainly a generation ahead of the post-1937 elite, and Khrushchev, born in 1894, antedated the second generation.

Some members of the third generation were given responsible posts—Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin (both born in 1931) became regional first secretaries in, respectively, 1970 and 1976, and Central Committee members in 1971 and 1981. Some of the individuals we have considered in earlier chapters also advanced at this time: Dobrik (born in 1927) and Pervyshin (born in 1932), for instance, entered the Central Committee in 1966 and 1976 respectively. But the top leadership positions, and not only in the Politburo, were still occupied by the previous generation. This personnel log-jam made a crucial contribution to the economic and technological stagnation of the USSR.

It was left to Gorbachev (anticipated to some extent by Andropov in 1982) to deal with this gerontocracy, and to attempt Russia's third elite revolution. The turnover that took place in the Central Committee in 1986 was high, at 45 per cent, but not as high as it had been in 1952 or 1961 (or—in annual terms—1934). The turnover at the 1990 congress was, however, the highest in its entire history, at 88 per cent. It was coupled with the first-ever reduction in the size of Central Committee membership—from 477 to 412 (all of them, admittedly, full members). Some members had died, including Kosygin, Suslov, and Brezhnev. And of the individuals we have considered in earlier chapters, many—Patolichev, Baibakov, Novikov, Vsevolozhskii, Nuriev, and Gorchakov—retired from their job slots at about the same time. Gorchakov, Novikov, Patolichev, Nuriev, and Vsevolozhskii were in consequence not re-elected to the Central Committee in 1986, and Baibakov and Dobrik were part of the mass retirement of 'dead souls' in April 1989. But by the end of the 1980s it was too late. While Stalin had been able to use a new and different generation, Gorbachev was not. Indeed, the fourth generation, born after 1940, hardly feature in this book. Viktor Mishin (born in 1943) entered the Central Committee in 1986; others, like Gennadii Ziuganov (born in 1944), although deputy head of the Ideological Department in 1989, never made it into the Central Committee before the collapse of communist power. It remains an open question whether a more rapid promotion of the fourth generation, or even the third generation, would have made the system more adaptable and allowed it to survive.

The process of 'election' of the Central Committee has already been discussed in earlier chapters. It was based, in nearly all cases up to the 1990 congress, on a single list presented by the party leadership to congress delegates. The creation of the final version of this list evidently involved, at times, an element of consultation with regional leaders. During most of the Soviet period, however, the greater part of those elected corresponded to a centrally approved group of job slots, a practice that had much in common with the *nomenklatura* system. The emphasis in the list of job slots did change over time. In the revolutionary period and the 1920s the small Central Committee elite consisted mainly of key central officials, with 'regional' representation concentrated in the cities of Moscow and Leningrad. This accurately reflected the isolation of the regime during the New Economic

Policy, when it focused on the few urban centres with their working-class populations and paid much less attention to the vast hinterland of peasant family farms. The trade-union leadership, equally, had more weight than it would have in later years. The leaders of the Red Army, however, were not part of this elite; the military, small in numbers and in political standing at this time, was still largely commanded by former tsarist officers.

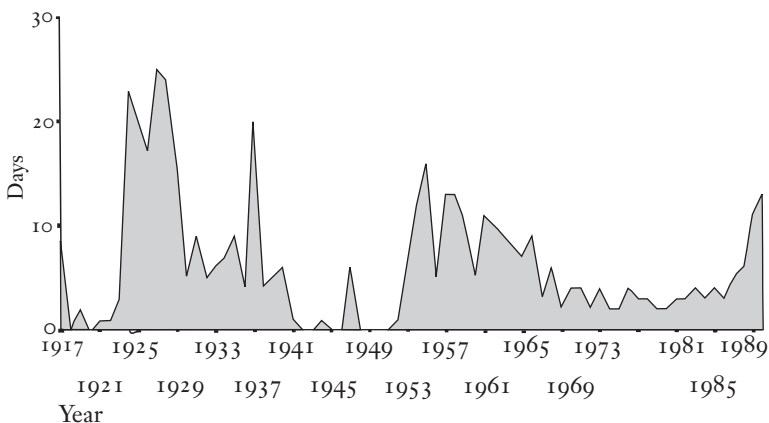
One of the ironies in the long-term history of the Central Committee is that it was in the 1930s, at about the same time that the Purges inflicted the worst personnel losses and the elite was personally and physically least secure, that the job-slot system was definitively established. This followed on from the maturing of the Soviet administrative system, especially with the establishment of economic branch ministries, and of a federation of union republics that were divided in their turn into regions and districts. The Red Army, too, was by the mid-1930s commanded by 'new' men, and it had a large contingent on the Central Committee. It did not matter—in terms of the system—that the first group of occupiers of these job slots would be ruthlessly purged. The job-slot system would survive and, in its essence, remain for fifty years. In the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years, and up to 1986, the expansion of the Central Committee was a balanced one, as the various sectors grew proportionately. The difference was that less important ministries and regions, including many in the non-Slavic republics, gained *ex officio* seats on the Central Committee. The appearance of an increasing number of representatives of the diplomatic corps also reflected the self-awareness of the USSR as a superpower. The inclusion of token mass representatives on the Central Committee from 1956 was of some importance as a means by which the regime could signal its social priorities, but they never made up more than 10 per cent of the total membership.

The 1990 Central Committee reflected the first structural change in the party's representative system since at least the early 1920s. It was symptomatic, indeed, of an historic change in the relationship between state and party. Just as it had taken the social and economic revolution of the late 1920s and early 1930s to establish a comprehensive framework of party control over state and society, so *perestroika* represented the 're-statization' of Soviet politics and with it the 'de-elitization' of the Central Committee of the CPSU. It was part of the Gorbachev leadership's project to restrict the party as an organization to a more limited sphere, and to free large areas of economic and social life from political direction. Once the party no longer dominated the political system and the political system no longer dominated a much more differentiated society, the party elite within the Central Committee could no longer use it as a means of exercising control over the entire Soviet system.

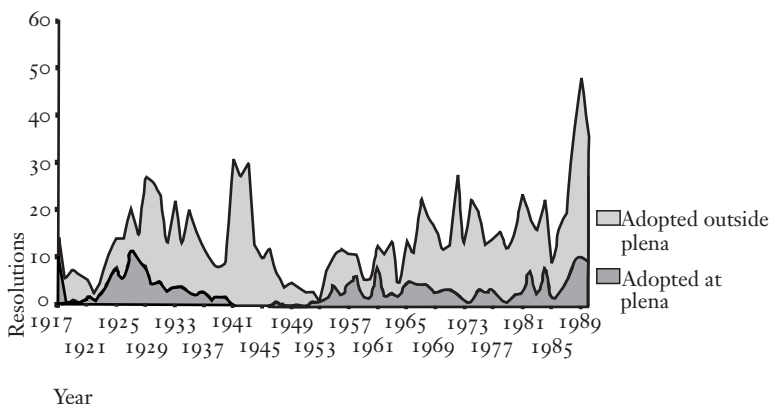
The Central Committee was one of the very few institutions that did not change its name or formal function during the whole of the communist era. It nominally controlled the party's affairs between congresses, but the reality was

very different from what was laid down in the party rules. The Central Committee was never a 'parliament of the party', although it sometimes aspired to that role. Throughout the Soviet period it was dominated by the top leadership, what had been described as its 'narrow membership' (*uzkii sostav*) of the Central Committee in the early years, and by the Politburo and Secretariat of the Central Committee from 1919 up to 1991. 'Collective leadership', in the sense portrayed in party propaganda, was always a fiction; and the administrative functions carried out in the name of the Central Committee by its *apparatus* had little to do with the Central Committee as a collective of elite members.

The Central Committee met infrequently throughout the Soviet period, although there were substantial variations over time (see Figure 8.1). There were relatively few meetings during the Civil War years, but there was a party congress or conference every year from 1917 up to 1927, which provided an alternative framework for dialogue within the political elite. The mid-1920s, indeed, were the years in which the Central Committee was convened most often over its entire history, and they were the years in which the largest numbers of resolutions were adopted at plenary meetings, not simply in the name of the Central Committee (see Figure 8.2). There were fewer meetings in the 1930s and 1940s, once Stalin had established his ascendancy, with the exception of 1937, when three plenary meetings were used to complete the rout of his suspected opponents; indeed, for most of the 1940s and early 1950s meetings were very rare. The number of resolutions adopted in the name of the Central Committee was at a particularly high point during the wartime years, as the party sought to exercise its authority over the military effort; but these were issued by the apparatus rather than adopted at plenary meetings during these Stalinist years, and—quite improperly, according to its rules—there was no party congress at all between 1939 and 1952.



8.1 CC days of meeting, 1917-1990



## 8.2 CC resolutions, 1917–1990

Khrushchev had a rather different view of the role the party might perform and of the way it might operate; and the 1950s, under his leadership, saw a sharp increase in the number of Central Committee meetings and in the number of decisions that it adopted, more in some years than the number that were adopted by full-time officials in its name. But after 1964 the Central Committee began to meet less often, sometimes not even twice a year as the party rules required, and in two of these years—1974 and 1979—there was only a single resolution that was adopted at one of its plenary meetings, a sharp contrast to the growing volume of decisions that were taken by the full-time apparatus in the name of the Central Committee. There was a further contrast after 1985, as Gorbachev began to promote ‘democratization’ within the party as well as outside it; but the frequency with which the Central Committee was convened still fell below the levels that had been established under Khrushchev, and even more so the levels that had been customary during the 1920s. The numbers of resolutions adopted at plenary meetings were, however, among the highest in the party’s history, and the number of decisions adopted on the authority of the Central Committee was as high as at any time apart from the exceptional wartime years.

Throughout the Soviet era, from the decision to seize power at its meeting of 10 October 1917 to the final July plenum of 1991, the Central Committee mainly ratified decisions (and appointments) that had been initiated or pre-decided by an inner circle. In the only cases when a plenum did intervene directly in top leadership politics, in 1957 and 1964, it did so as an instrument of the dominant faction in the Politburo. But that did not mean that plenums were unimportant, or that the opinions of the Central Committee as a whole could be—or were—routinely ignored. The members of the Central Committee were, after all, the national elite. They would have responsibility for implementing any decisions that were taken through the institutions they directed; and they had the same pow-

ers in their own localities, state institutions, or military organizations as the top leadership enjoyed in Moscow. Equally, as a group they had interests of their own. By definition office-holders, they had an interest in maintaining the status quo based upon an automatic association between Central Committee membership and leading positions: in remaining, as Lewin has put it, a 'tenured bureaucracy'.<sup>9</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, they developed an interest in preserving other kinds of privilege; and after the experience of 1937 they also had to consider their personal security. On three occasions the top leadership confronted the Central Committee elite as a collective and, although the outcomes varied considerably, each occasion revealed an impressive degree of elite cohesion. In the late 1930s Stalin had to destroy most of the Central Committee in order to dominate it. In the 1950s first the 'anti-party group' (in 1957) and then Khrushchev (in the early 1960s) effectively lost out in attempts to marginalize it. From the 1960s to the 1980s the interests of the elite were paramount, and the system existed in a sense *for* the elite; it was allowed unprecedented personal security and stability of tenure. A quarter of a century later Gorbachev, unable to persuade the elite to implement his programme of change as quickly as he wished or needed, moved effectively to disband it; this in fact would contribute to the collapse of the entire system.

There was a tension between the interests of this elite, which included its self-preservation, and two other major forces in Soviet history. The first of these was the rapidly changing nature (and demands) of Soviet society, which the leadership could respond to only with considerable delay. The second, related to the first, was the priorities of the top leadership, which was very powerful within a Marxist 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and Leninist tradition of democratic centralism. Stalin had a programme which included radical modernization and the guarantee of his own despotic personal power. In the end this led to the physical destruction of much of the elite in the late 1930s; as has been argued, the degree of terror that was required to achieve Stalin's requirements shows how cohesive and entrenched the elite had become. Gorbachev, a half-century later, had a vision of a dynamic and modernizing system that accommodated many of the values of the Western democracies that it had always rejected. He tried initially to achieve this by using the elite (or a renewed version of it); in the end he chose a different approach through the state. In between, the Khrushchev experience showed the danger of challenging the elite, a lesson that Brezhnev had clearly learned.

The history of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1991 was not just the history of its elite. The transformation of society and economy had continuing effects; increasingly, from the 1950s, the international environment exercised an influence on

<sup>9</sup> Moshe Lewin, *Russia/USSR/Russia: The Drive and Drift of a Superstate* (New York: New Press, 1995), 91.



domestic affairs, from youth culture to an arms race that the system was unable in the end to sustain. Historians and political scientists have meanwhile focused on the pinnacle of the leadership—Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev. Nevertheless, the history of the elite at the level of the Central Committee membership provides both an element of change and an element of continuity. Without this the Russian experience of communist rule is incomprehensible.

## An Enduring Elite?

Revolutions, for Pareto, were above all a matter of elite change.<sup>10</sup> For many there had been a revolution in precisely this sense in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s, with changes in government and a shift towards market-oriented policies throughout the region. Several years on, the change looked less decisive. Former communist parties had returned to power—at least temporarily—in Albania and Hungary, in Poland and Lithuania, and in Bulgaria. In Romania there was a change of leadership but less clearly a change of political regime, at least not until a former member of the party Secretariat had been defeated in his bid for a further presidential term in 1996; meanwhile, in neighbouring Moldova a former member of the Politburo won the presidential election that took place later in the year, joining six other veterans of the CPSU's ruling body in post-communist leadership positions. Former communists maintained their dominance in Serbia and—with a change of labels—in most of former Soviet Central Asia, and they won parliamentary and presidential elections in Mongolia. In Cuba, China, and most of South-East Asia communist rule was still intact.<sup>11</sup> In Russia itself the Communist Party was suspended after the attempted coup in August 1991 and then banned the following November; but it revived in early 1993 after the ban had been declared unconstitutional, polled strongly in the elections of December of that year, and emerged as the most successful party in the Duma elections that took place in December 1995. The Russian public, for their part, remained committed to the concept of a USSR; they thought it would have been 'better if everything had stayed as it was in 1985';<sup>12</sup> they rated their political system

<sup>10</sup> See Vilfredo Pareto, *Treatise on General Sociology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1935).

<sup>11</sup> On the varied fate of the post-communist parties see e.g. Alison Mayle and John Nagle, 'Resurrection of the Successor Parties and Democratization in East-Central Europe', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 28: 4 (Dec. 1995), 393–410; Michael Waller, 'Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-Democratization?', *Party Politics*, 1: 4 (Oct. 1995), 473–90; Richard Rose, 'Ex-Communists in Post-Communist Societies', *Political Quarterly*, 67: 1 (Jan.–Mar. 1996), 14–25; and John T. Ishiyama, 'The Sickle or the Rose? Previous Regime Types and the Evolution of the Ex-Communist Parties in Post-Communist Politics', *Comparative Political Studies*, 30: 3 (June 1997), 299–330.

<sup>12</sup> In the March 1991 referendum on the preservation of the USSR as a 'renewed federation' 76.4% voted in favour on a turnout of 80% (*Izvestiia*, 28 Mar. 1991, pp. 1, 3). There was agreement in a succession of surveys, that the dissolution of the USSR had been a 'great misfortune'; in 1995 81% shared this view and only 16% disagreed (see Richard B. Dobson, *Is Russia Turning the Corner?*

less highly than the one they had experienced in the Soviet years;<sup>13</sup> and in any case they thought the communists were still in power—if anyone was, in a state in which organized crime was already regarded as the dominant influence on policy-making.<sup>14</sup>

There were differing views about the extent to which communists or former communists were, in fact, still in power throughout the Central and East European countries. There was relatively little direct continuity in the Czech Republic, where the Communist Party quickly became a marginal force;<sup>15</sup> in Poland, where the ‘core of the new power elite’ consisted of ‘new people’;<sup>16</sup> or in Hungary, where there was a ‘remarkable transformation’ in which the great majority of the former communist elite lost their positions.<sup>17</sup> In Russia, some argued similarly, there was ‘relatively little overlap between the Gorbachev and El’tsin political elites’, although the same authors reported elsewhere that more than a third of the post-communist political elite had held full-time executive positions within the CPSU—a very narrow definition of elite status in the Soviet

*Changing Russian Public Opinion, 1991–1996* (Washington DC: USIA, 1996), 32), and four years later the proportion who regretted the demise of the USSR was as high as 85% (*Novye izvestiia*, 30 Jan. 1999, p. 1). For the view that it would have been better if everything had remained as it was in 1985 see *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial’nye peremeny: monitoring obschestvennogo mneniia*, no. 6, 1995, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Russians viewed their ‘current political system’ more negatively (46%) than positively (28%); they were more positive about the political system they would have in five years (43% as against 20%), but they were more positive still about ‘the political system we had before *perestroika*’ (59% were positive and just 22% negative). See Richard Rose, *New Russia Barometer V: Between Two Elections* (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 260, 1996), 47–50.

<sup>14</sup> *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 35, 1994, p. 2, and no. 23, 1994, p. 2. More than half (51%) of those who were asked in late 1997 thought the mafia ran Russia; 29% thought it was the state apparatus, and 26% private capital, and just 22% and 14% respectively thought it was the president or the government (*Izvestiia*, 23 Jan. 1998, p. 5).

<sup>15</sup> See Zdenka Mansfeldova, ‘The Emerging New Czech Political Elite’, a paper prepared for the ECPR joint sessions in Madrid, April 1994. Thomas A. Baylis has argued similarly that the role of former members of the communist *nomenklatura* is ‘negligible’ within the political executives of the former GDR and Czechoslovakia, but in Slovakia former communists had ‘taken most of the leading positions in the three post-1992 governments’ (‘Elite Change after Communism: Eastern Germany, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia’, *East European Politics and Societies*, 12: 2 (Spring 1998), 276, 279).

<sup>16</sup> Jacek Wasiliewski and Edmind Wnuk-Lipinski, ‘Poland: Winding Road from the Communist to the Post-Solidarity Elite’, *Theory and Society*, 24: 5 (Oct. 1995), 690. For a further discussion see e.g. Adam Pogorecki, ‘The Communist and Postcommunist Nomenklatura’, *Polish Sociological Review*, 2: 106 (1994), 111–23; Jacek Wasiliewski (ed.), *Konsolidacja elit politycznych 1991–1993* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 1994); and Ivan Szelenyi et al. (eds.), *Elity w Polsce, w Rosji i na Węgrzech* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> See Szonja Szelenyi, Ivan Szelenyi, and Imre Kovach, ‘The Making of the Hungarian Postcommunist Elite: Circulation in Politics, Reproduction in the Economy’, *Theory and Society*, 24: 5 (Oct. 1995), 712. The change appeared less dramatic after the Socialist Party had won the 1994 parliamentary elections; as Andras Rona-Tas notes, the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the former regime was an ‘especially hostile period for the old *nomenklatura*’, but subsequent elections ‘brought back into positions of power many of the old cadres including *nomenklatura* members’ (*The Great Surprise of the Small Transformation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 224). Changes in the region as a whole are considered in John Higley, Jan Pakulski, and Włodzimierz Weselowski (eds.), *Postcommunist Elites and Democracy in Eastern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

period—and that, at the regional level, more than half of those in post in January 1995 had done so.<sup>18</sup> Others agreed there had been particularly high levels of continuity at the local or regional level,<sup>19</sup> but insisted on a ‘marked continuity in elite composition’ much more generally, with members of the Soviet elite in its broad sense, the so-called *nomenklatura*, being the most likely of all the former communist elites to retain their positions.<sup>20</sup> For some, the process of change in post-communist Europe was best conceived as a form of ‘political capitalism’, similar to the process by which the bureaucracy in post-colonial Africa had used its position to accumulate wealth at the time of independence;<sup>21</sup> for others, influenced by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, it was more useful to speak of a process of ‘power conversion’ in which the outgoing *nomenklatura* had been able to use their networks of influence to transform the political capital they had enjoyed under the old regime into economic capital, often making use of a spurious privatization of public assets to do so.<sup>22</sup> The average Russian *apparatchik*, meanwhile, had ‘hardly left his chair’.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> David Lane and Cameron Ross, ‘Russian Political Elites, 1991–1995: Recruitment and Renewal’, *International Politics*, 34: 2 (June 1997), 169–92, at pp. 171–2; similarly Lane, ‘Transition under Eltsin: The Nomenklatura and Political Elite Circulation’, *Political Studies*, 45: 5 (Dec. 1997), 855–74. Similar views are presented in Lane and Ross, *The Transition from Communism to Capitalism: Ruling elites from Gorbachev to Yeltsin* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). T. H. Rigby, in another recent study, has found little continuity within a narrowly defined ‘top’ political elite, but with substantial variations between members of the government, senior office-holders in the State Duma, and leading officials in the presidential administration (‘New Top Elites for Old in Russian Politics’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 29: 2 (Apr. 1999), 323–43). On elites in general see Heinrich Best and Ulrike Becker (eds.), *Elites in Transition: Elite Research in Central and Eastern Europe* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1997), which includes two chapters specifically on Russian elites.

<sup>19</sup> *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 4 Mar. 1992, p. 2 (up to 80% of local functionaries were the same as they had been in the Soviet period); Yeltsin himself insisted that there had been less continuity at national level (*Izvestiia*, 27 Mar. 1992, p. 7).

<sup>20</sup> John Higley, Judith Kullberg, and Jan Pakulski, ‘The Persistence of Postcommunist Elites’, *Journal of Democracy*, 7: 2 (Apr. 1996), 133–48, at pp. 135–6. Jacek Wasiliewski has concluded that the ‘simple continuity of elites’ was in fact the ‘Russian case’s dominant feature’ (Hungary, Poland, and Russia: The Fate of Nomenklatura Elites’, in Mattei Dogan and John Higley (eds.), *Elite Crises and the Origins of Regimes* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 166; a similar view is presented in Thomas A. Baylis, ‘Plus ça change? Transformation and Continuity Amongst East European Elites’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 27: 3 (Sept. 1994), 315–28, in Higley and Pakulski, ‘Elite Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 30: 3 (Nov. 1995), 415–35, and in Kullberg, Higley, and Pakulski, ‘Elites, Institutions and Democratization in Russia and Eastern Europe’, in Graeme Gill (ed.), *Elites and Leadership in Russian Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 106–33. Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsley have advanced the related argument that the changes of 1989 in Eastern Europe were a successful revolution led by the former technocratic fraction of the communist elite against the bureaucracy: *Making Capitalism without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe* (London: Verso, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), ch. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Szelenyi *et al.*, ‘The Making of the Hungarian Postcommunist Elite’, 698. For Bourdieu’s conceptualization see his ‘Forms of Capital’, in J. G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood, 1986).

<sup>23</sup> David Remnick, *Lenin’s Tomb* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), 504.

Continuity and change are never simple notions, least of all when they are considered at a time of political crisis.<sup>24</sup> The 'crisis', for a start, had been developing over a long period, and arguably continued into the post-communist era; while there had been systemic change—including competitive elections and the legalization of multi-party politics—even before the end of Soviet rule. Equally, questions of continuity have to be considered across two political regimes and a change in property relations. The Soviet elite was more than proportionally Russian, but it was also representative of a society, that of the former USSR, in which Russians accounted for just over half of the total population and in which the various republics had an automatic share of elite positions, including a number of job slots on the Central Committee. Most of these non-Russian CC members, clearly, were likely to pursue their careers in the newly independent states of which they were citizens after 1991, rather than in post-communist Russia. And while the elite, up to the late 1980s, could reasonably be defined as those who were members of the Central Committee of the CPSU, this was clearly inappropriate by the post-communist 1990s. By this time the holders of positions that had a disproportionate influence on national decision-making included the leaders of a variety of parties and organized interests, including newly established businesses and the largest banking and industrial groups. The passage of time, moreover, would in itself have brought about a substantial generational change in the elite, given the ages that prevailed at leading levels of party and state in the late Soviet period. As we have already seen, the average age of members of the Central Committee stood at 58 in 1986, close to the male retirement age, and many would have withdrawn from public life by the early 1990s even if the Soviet system had persisted. Others, conversely, lost ground in the early Yeltsin years but regained their positions in the mid-1990s, in the form of a political and business class that was 'closely associated with the party-state and economic *nomenklatura* of the 1980s'.<sup>25</sup>

Studies of elites in the post-communist period have employed reputational, positional, and decision-making approaches,<sup>26</sup> and have drawn on interviews as well as on the much larger numbers that can be considered through the use of printed biographical sources.<sup>27</sup> The most substantial interview-based study of its kind concentrated upon a group of about 1,800 people—four or five times larger

<sup>24</sup> For a general treatment see Dogan and Higley (eds.), *Elites, Crises, and the Origins of Regimes*.

<sup>25</sup> Roi Medvedev, *Zdorov'e i vlast' v Rossii: novyi klass rossiiskogo obshchestva. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: tri goda v novoi Rossii* (Moscow: Russlit, 1997), 26.

<sup>26</sup> For examples of these approaches see David Lane, 'Gorbachev's Political Elite in the Terminal Stage of the USSR: A Reputational Analysis', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 10: 1 (Mar. 1994), 104–16; Lane, 'Political Elites Under Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the Early Period of Transition: A Reputational and Analytic Study', in Timothy Colton and Robert C. Tucker (eds.), *Patterns in Post-Soviet Political Leadership* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1995); and for a more general discussion, Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

<sup>27</sup> For an overview see George Moyser and Margaret Wagstaffe (eds.), *Research Methods for Elite Studies* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

than our Central Committee elite—who had occupied positions in the Soviet political elite in 1988, and upon the same or different individuals who occupied elite positions in 1993, with each of whom the All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion conducted a standardized interview.<sup>28</sup> About half were judged to be members of the *nomenklatura* of the late Soviet period, that is, they held positions to which appointments had required high-level party approval. The other half represented the ruling elite in the post-communist period—those who exercised a disproportionate influence on national decision-making. The interviews, an hour or more in length, covered all the main stages of the life-cycle: education, full-time employment, and Communist Party membership. The Soviet ruling group and the new Russian elite, it emerged, were ‘in many respects very similar’. Both were predominantly male (93 per cent in the old Soviet *nomenklatura*, 94 per cent in the Russian post-communist elite), and nearly all of them had received a higher education (97 and 94 per cent respectively).<sup>29</sup> Similar or at least substantial proportions (97 per cent and 78 per cent respectively) had been members of the CPSU, and 71 and 47 per cent respectively had maintained a much closer association with the former regime as holders of elective positions in the party organization.<sup>30</sup> The new elite was younger, but both groups were overwhelmingly Russian, and both were likely to come from a privileged family background. A significant proportion (more than a quarter in both cases) were themselves the children of *nomenklatura* parents, confirming a tendency towards self-recruitment that was not true to the same extent of other post-communist elites.<sup>31</sup>

A related concern of this study was to establish the extent to which the *nomenklatura* elite had managed to retain their position in the post-communist period. Only 11 per cent of those who were surveyed had left public life entirely, suggesting that ‘on the whole the *nomenklatura* was able to adapt to the changes that were taking place and did not experience downward social mobility’.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, more than 60 per cent of the former *nomenklatura* were still occupying positions in the early 1990s that were comparable with their positions in the late Soviet period. A further 15 per cent held positions that were just below the upper levels of the post-communist elite; overall, only 13 per cent of the late Soviet *nomenklatura* found themselves entirely outside it. In the case of the former party *nomenklatura* more

<sup>28</sup> For the early findings see N. S. Ershova, ‘Transformatsiia praviashchei elity Rossii v usloviakh sotsial'nogo pereloma’, in T. I. Zaslavskaja and L. A. Arutiunian (eds.), *Kuda idet Rossiia? Alternativy obschestvennogo razvitiia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Interpraks, 1994), 151–5. More extended discussions are available in B. V. Golovachev *et al.*, ‘Formirovanie praviashchei elity v Rossii’, *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: monitoring obschestvennogo mneniia*, no. 6, 1995, pp. 18–24 (part 1) and no. 1, 1996, pp. 32–8 (part 2); and in Ivan Szelenyi and Szonja Szelenyi, ‘Circulation or Reproduction of Elites During the Postcommunist Transformation of Eastern Europe: Introduction’, *Theory and Society*, 24: 5 (Nov. 1995), 615–38.

<sup>29</sup> Ershova, ‘Transformatsiia’, 153.

<sup>30</sup> Golovachev *et al.*, ‘Formirovanie’, part 2, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup> Ershova, ‘Transformatsiia’, 154 (the comparison is with Poland and Hungary).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

particularly, a third had moved into leading positions in the post-communist government and another third had moved into leading positions in economic management. Overall, more than 80 per cent of the former party *nomenklatura* members who were interviewed had moved into positions that were either in the first or second rank of the post-communist elite, and conversely, almost 80 per cent of the post-communist elite had enjoyed elite or 'pre-elite' positions in the late Soviet period. Russia, for these reasons, was a better example of the reproduction of elites than of their circulation, and a much better example of elite reproduction than either Hungary or Poland.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, at least in this case, the ability of elites to transmit their status across generations had not diminished with the collapse of the Communist Party and the emergence of markets: 'if anything, it ha[d] improved.'<sup>34</sup>

Continuity may also be considered in terms of the tenure of key positions. At the start of 1997, for instance, seven of the fifteen heads of the post-Soviet states were the former first secretaries of their republican organizations of the CPSU, and meetings of the heads of the CIS member states had 'virtually the same participants' as meetings of the Politburo in the late Soviet period.<sup>35</sup> Another measure, closer to the approach we have followed in this book, was the proportion of Central Committee members of the Gorbachev years who found themselves among the political elite of the early 1990s, as defined by inclusion in a national 'who's who'. The first substantial directory that could be employed for this purpose appeared in 1993, covering the other former Soviet republics as well as Russia.<sup>36</sup> Of the members of the largely Brezhnevite Central Committee of 1986, sixty-five (14 per cent) were listed; of the Gorbachev Central Committee of 1990, however, nearly a quarter—ninety-nine members of the total of 412—were included. About the same proportion (11 per cent) of the 1986 Central Committee were listed in a Russian biographical directory that appeared in 1996, and a fifth (21 per cent) of the 1990 Central Committee.<sup>37</sup> These were higher levels of continuity than in the East European countries with which the Soviet experience had been compared, and they suggested that the more 'indigenous' the regime and the greater its longevity, the greater the extent to which its post-communist leadership was likely to have its origins in the official service of the old regime.

Many of the old Central Committee, indeed, were prominent in government in

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 154–5; similarly Golovachev *et al.*, 'Formirovanie', part 2, p. 37; and Szelenyi and Szelenyi, 'Circulation or Reproduction of Elites', 621.

<sup>34</sup> Eric Hanley, Natasha Yerzhova, and Richard Anderson, 'Russia—Old Wine in a New Bottle? The Circulation and Reproduction of Russian Elites, 1983–1993', *Theory and Society*, 24, no. 5 (Nov. 1995), 639–68, at p. 665.

<sup>35</sup> *Izvestiia*, 6 Dec. 1996, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> See *Kto est' kto v Rossii i v blizhnem zarubezh'e*. The use of reputational approaches of this kind was pioneered by Floyd Hunter in 'Regional City'; for a discussion see Geraint Parry, *Political Elites* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), ch. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Of the 1986 Central Committee, 31 of the 307 full members and 21 of the 170 candidates were included; of the 1990 Central Committee, 86 of the 412 (see *Kto est' kto v Rossii* (1996)).

post-communist Russia, not just among its politically influential. President Yeltsin had served on the Central Committee since 1981; his prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and foreign minister and later prime minister Evgenii Primakov since 1986. In the Council of the Federation, which was elected in 1993 as the upper house of the new Federal Assembly, there were ten members of the 1990 Central Committee, among them a series of regional first secretaries including Akhsarbek Galazov of the North Ossetian party organization, Iuri Goriachev of Ul'ianovsk, Aleksei Ponomarev of Belgorod, the Buriat first secretary Leonid Potapov, the Kaluga first secretary Valerii Sudarenkov, and the Tatar first secretary (and after June 1991, president) Mintimer Shaimiev. Another member of the Central Committee who figured in the Federation Council was Vasilii Starodubtsev, chairman of the V. I. Lenin collective farm in the Tula region but better known as a member of the State Emergency Committee that had launched the attempted coup in August 1991; another still was the Orel first secretary and later Politburo and Secretariat member Egor Stroeve, who had been elected head of the regional administration in 1993. In January 1996 he was in turn elected speaker of the upper house as a whole.

Continuity was considerably greater in the lower house of the Federal Assembly, the State Duma, particularly after the December 1995 election brought success to the Communist list of candidates and to Communist-sponsored candidates in the single-member constituencies. In all, twenty-two members of the 1986 or 1990 Central Committees were elected to the Duma in 1993 or 1995, and nine of them were elected in both years. Not all the former Central Committee members, admittedly, were elected to the new parliament as Communists. Alevtina Fedulova, deputy head of the Soviet Women's Committee and a Central Committee member from 1990, stood for the Duma on the list put forward by Women of Russia and won election in 1993. Vladimir Gusev, a former vice-premier who had been first secretary in Saratov, stood as a member of Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democrats in 1993 and 1995 and won election on both occasions. More commonly, members of the Central Committee in the late Soviet years stood as Communists or independents, and won election in the single member constituencies as well as through the list of candidates nominated by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the parallel contest for party-list places in the Duma. In December 1995 successful candidates on the party's list who had formerly been members of the Central Committee included the former Vologda and Russian first secretary, Valerii Kuptsov; Viktor Zorkal'tsev and Aleksei Pomorov, both former first secretaries in Tomsk; the Udmurt first secretary, Nikolai Sapozhnikov; and the Krasnodar second secretary, Boris Kibirev.

Some former members of the Central Committee stood as individual candidates for the State Duma, and enjoyed remarkable success: the former North Ossetian first secretary Alexander Dzasokhov, for instance, took more than half the vote in his constituency in 1995 (he went on to win the regional presidency in

early 1998 with an even larger majority), and former prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, standing under the auspices of his 'Power to the People' movement, won more than half the vote in Belgorod. Perhaps the most remarkable success was that of Sergei Maniakin (born in 1923), who had served as first secretary in Omsk region as early as 1961 and as a Central Committee member from that year up to 1990, and who had acted as chairman of the Committee of People's Control which was supposed to ensure the prudent use of public funds. It was in this capacity that he spoke at the Central Committee plenum that met in October 1987, taking the floor immediately after Boris Yeltsin had delivered a remarkable and unexpected attack upon the Gorbachev leadership. Maniakin denounced the future president for failing in his job in Moscow—there were unacceptable shortages of fruit and vegetables, and numerous examples of waste and inefficiency—and went on to accuse Yeltsin of 'political immaturity' for offering his resignation, and of a series of related 'character faults'.<sup>38</sup> Now 72 and a pensioner, Maniakin headed the poll with 21.5 per cent of the vote to win a seat in his native region on behalf of Ryzhkov's 'Power to the People'. Another member of the Central Committee in the late Soviet period, newspaper editor Gennadii Seleznev, was elected speaker of the Duma when it convened after the elections in January 1996.

Continuity was not just a question of the retention of executive positions; more fundamental was a process of 'power conversion' by which the outgoing elite could seek to turn their political position into more enduring forms of advantage. There were several ways in which they could do so, most of which had their origin in the late 1980s as the political system was democratized (which introduced an element of uncertainty into the tenure of elite positions) and as the economy was opened up to a variety of forms of ownership (which created new opportunities for the accumulation of private wealth). One of the most important was the 'Komsomol economy' that began to develop under the guidance of Egor Ligachev, at this time the second-ranking member of the Gorbachev leadership.<sup>39</sup> The 'Komsomol economy' took its origin from a resolution adopted by the Central Committee in 1986 in which it approved a proposal from the communist youth organization that it expand the scope of its network of 'centres of scientific and technical creativity', the first of which had been established in the early 1980s.<sup>40</sup> The new centres were intended to assist the Komsomol and its members to adapt to a changing, more market-oriented economic environment, and it was under their auspices that many in the first wave of new Russian entrepreneurs began their business careers:

<sup>38</sup> *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 2, 1989, p. 243.

<sup>39</sup> See Kryzhanovskaya and White, 'From Soviet *nomenklatura*', 716–21.

<sup>40</sup> For the Central Committee's resolution see V. N. Sungorkin and I. A. Savvateeva (eds.), *Firma pri gorkome* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1990), 222; and for its intended purpose *XX S'ezd Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzu molodezhi, 15–18 aprelia 1987 goda: stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1987), i. 64. The term 'Komsomol economy' sounded a little odd, an official conceded, and yet it had already acquired a legal basis and observable characteristics (*Molodoi kommunist*, no. 2, 1990, p. 39).



like Konstantin Borovoi, a computer scientist who moved into the Komsomol economy and later established the country's leading raw materials exchange and his own political party; or Konstantin Zatulin, a Moscow University history graduate who gave up his dissertation to work for the economics secretary of the Komsomol Central Committee and then became chairman of 'Entrepreneurs For a New Russia', a Duma deputy, and a leading figure in the Congress of Russian Communities; or Mikhail Khodorkovskii, who graduated from a deputy Komsomol secretaryship at the Mendelev Chemistry Institute to the chairmanship of Menatep Bank.<sup>41</sup>

The scope of the new centres was extended further during 1988, allowing them to engage in the manufacture of consumer goods and to establish economic relations with foreign firms and organizations;<sup>42</sup> they could set their own prices for the goods they imported from abroad, and were relieved of all customs duties.<sup>43</sup> The Law on Co-operatives, adopted in May 1988, was modified as a result of pressure from the Komsomol to cover 'other public organizations', and this allowed the new youth centres to range even more widely (indeed, for some the new law was itself nothing more than a device for 'transforming the *nomenklatura*'s wealth into legal private enterprises').<sup>44</sup> Complaints soon began to reach the party authorities that youth organizations had been buying and reselling video recorders, computers, and other forms of technology at inflated prices, and with 'crude violations of the law';<sup>45</sup> Gorbachev, addressing the 21st Komsomol Congress in April 1990, warned that it was not appropriate for the party's youth movement to become involved in wholly commercial activity of this kind, but by then the system was developing under its own momentum, with a network of shops and other enterprises that had a staff of more than a million young people.<sup>46</sup> Komsomol businessmen, with party support, established the first commercial banks and exchanges; they set up construction companies; they dominated show business and the video market, and were influential in tourism and foreign trade; more generally, as others put it, the whole organization had become a kind of 'Harvard Business School of the new culture, turning out entrepreneurs who moved quickly into everything from video-game concessions to computer sales and publishing'.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Bunin *et al.*, *Biznesmeny Rossii*, 35–6, 199–200, 170. Khodorkovskii and a colleague published a statement of their materialistic credo in Khodorkovskii and Leonid Nevzlin, *Chelovek s rublem* (Moscow: Menatep-inform, 1992), extracted in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 30 (1992), 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM, 1988* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1989), 187.

<sup>43</sup> *Sobranie postanovlenii pravitel'stva SSSR (otdel pervyi)*, no. 29, 1988, art. 81.

<sup>44</sup> For the text of the law as adopted see *Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR*, 22 (1988), art. 355 (at p. 383); the quotation is from Leonid Khotin, 'Old and New Entrepreneurs in Today's Russia', *Problems of Post-Communism*, 43: 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1996), 49–57, at p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> *Dokumenty TsK VLKSM, 1989* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1990), 205.

<sup>46</sup> *Dokumenty i materialy XXI s'ezda Vsesoiuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna molodezhi, 11–18 aprelia 1990 g.* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1990), 28 (Gorbachev) and 40; somewhat different staff numbers were reported in *Molodoi kommunist*, no. 8, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Medvedev, *Zdorov'e i vlast'*, 15–16; Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, 444.

There were several activities that were particularly important in facilitating the transition from power to property. One was the establishment of joint ventures. The elite had always enjoyed privileged access to the outside world, in terms of travel, medical care, or simply tourism. The difference between the international exchange value of the rouble and its artificial and much higher domestic rate meant that anything that was purchased abroad could be realized at a considerable premium, and that Russian commodities that could be sold abroad could generate a very substantial speculative gain. Government was itself involved in activities of this kind, even in the Brezhnev years; staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, for instance, bought and sold commodities on the American stock exchange, and several grain deals in the 1960s and 1970s were still remembered in ministerial circles as enormously profitable.<sup>48</sup> The establishment of joint ventures in the late 1980s took these activities much further; the first were set up on the direct initiative of the party authorities, using the resources of the Central Committee, and the whole process allowed party-controlled assets to be converted into the more defensible form of independent businesses that had foreign as well as Russian ownership and management. There were additional advantages to be gained through the financial markets, by converting nominal assets into cash at a substantial commission, or acting as intermediaries between domestic producers and their foreign clients. In all cases it was political position that was crucial, as any activities of this kind required the approval of the party leadership.

The most enduring form of advantage, however, was property, especially the conversion of state-owned into private property. In the early years of the economic reform only firms that were connected with the *nomenklatura* had the right to engage in property transactions; and when the first commercial firms were being established, some of the best state property was sold at advantageous prices to firms that had been founded with its participation. The Most Group, for instance, which became one of the leading financial and industrial associations in Russia, bought several buildings in the centre of Moscow for several tens of thousands of roubles, which was less than half their market value at the time. In the Soviet period the party had itself been the owner of a large number of buildings, in which its full-time officials, publishing houses, visitors, and educational institutions had been accommodated. These party buildings were, of their kind, the country's 'gold fund': they were the most imposing, the best-located, and the most carefully maintained. During the Gorbachev years the *nomenklatura* began to receive a profit from the rental of these buildings, the best of which were typically made available to foreign firms. Similarly, offices in the best buildings were rented out at low rates to firms that had *nomenklatura* contacts. The location of an office of this kind was itself a good indicator of the relationship its directors had managed to establish with the party elite: the more central and prestigious the

<sup>48</sup> This account is based on the interview testimony of Vladimir Shcherbakov, whose father took particular responsibility for 'grain business' within the USSR Ministry of Foreign Trade.

building, the better the connections of those who occupied it. The elite was meanwhile acquiring state dachas for its private ownership in what contemporaries indignantly described as '*nomenklatura* capitalism'.<sup>49</sup>

As well as buildings, enterprises of various kinds could be transferred from state to private hands through privatization. For the elite, a process of this kind began as early as 1987 and had largely been completed by the time a privatization programme for the population as a whole was launched in the early 1990s. This early '*nomenklatura* privatization' involved wholesale changes in the system of economic management, banking, and retail trade, and the sale of the most profitable enterprises. Ministries, for instance, were turned into commercial enterprises by a form of management buy-out. The minister typically retired, or became a consultant to the new enterprise, and a deputy minister became its president. The enterprise went on to acquire the status of a joint-stock company, with shareholders who were often the senior management of the former ministry, together with the enterprises for which it had been responsible. The ministry's property, in this way, became the private property of its leading officials; and they themselves not only privatized the organization for which they were responsible, but did so for their own benefit in a 'privatization of the state by the state'. The dominant gas producer, Gazprom, was a conspicuous example; it was formed out of the Ministry of the Gas Industry, with prime minister and former gas industry minister and later prime minister Chernomyrdin at its helm. In banking, similarly, Zhilsotsbank, which had been responsible for housing finance, became Mosbiznesbank under the same presidency; and Promstroibank, which had financed industrial investment, added 'commercial' to its name but retained the same management. Menatep, a new foundation, drew by contrast on a centre for the scientific and technical creativity of youth that had been established under the auspices of a district party committee in Moscow, and became known as the 'Komsomol bank'; its head, Khodorkorskii, told interviewers that '90 per cent of the prosperous people originated in the old *nomenklatura* structures or those close to them'.<sup>50</sup>

There is considerable evidence that the 'shift from power to property' was a deliberate policy, not simply the outcome of a series of individual transactions that involved elite members, and that its moving force was a ruling group that (in Egor Gaidar's words) wanted to 'turn the funeral of their social order into . . . the birth

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. *Argumenty i fakty*, 48 (1990), 5–6; similarly *Izvestiia*, 10 Oct. 1990, p. 3. An investigation into '*nomenklatura* privatization' was launched by indignant parliamentarians: see *Pravda*, 8 July 1991, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> Bunin *et al.*, *Biznesmeny Rossii*, 169–70; and *Kommercheskie banki: Spravochnik*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Intelbridge, 1995), i. 388–91. Khodorkovskii was interviewed in David Kotz with Fred Weir, *Revolution From Above: The Demise of the Soviet System* (London: Routledge, 1997), 121. The former Komsomol first secretary, Viktor Mironenko, confirmed in our own interview that Menatep was a 'former centre for the scientific and technical creativity of youth' (V.I. Mironenko interview, April 1992, Soviet Elite Project (SEP)).

of a new social order that was also based on the *nomenklatura*'.<sup>51</sup> The 'Komsomol economy', for instance, was not a uniquely Soviet development, but one that made its appearance in several other communist-ruled countries as party elites sought to secure their future in a new and more unpredictable environment.<sup>52</sup> There were similar efforts to 'involve the enterprises and businesses belonging to the party, and its cash reserves, in foreign economic activity', or even (as a member of the Secretariat suggested) to create an "invisible" party economy, to which only a very limited circle of people, defined by the general secretary or his deputy, would be given access'.<sup>53</sup> Much more general efforts of this kind were being made by 1991, reflecting the party's need to improve its own revenues as well as to secure the future of its leading members. A Politburo resolution specifically authorized the creation of 'party firms and enterprises' at the regional or republican level, and also allowed lower levels of the organization to invest the property at their disposal in commercial ventures. The party itself, meanwhile, established a central fund for investment in activities of this kind, which was intended to finance the most promising proposals put forward by regional and republican party committees; these could include the establishment of small businesses and joint ventures with foreign partners, in support of which the party would advance a loan at an advantageous rate of interest.<sup>54</sup>

The emergence of fully fledged private ownership in the late 1980s placed these developments on a new basis. It was access to private ownership that allowed the Soviet elite to secure its position as the future of the regime itself began to appear precarious; afterwards, for many, it was property, business, and banking that allowed them to retain their positions of advantage in very different circumstances. It was a shift, in effect, from power to property: the 'conversion of the power that belonged to the old party *nomenklatura* into real property', as economist Grigorii Iavlinskii put it, 'and then its conversion back into power of an almost unlimited kind'.<sup>55</sup>

The outcome, for a Gorbachev adviser, was a 'revolution of the second secretaries' or what others called a 'revolution of deputies', but not, for many, a revolution in the classic sense.<sup>56</sup> For the Hungarians, what had taken place was

<sup>51</sup> Egor Gaidar, *Gosudarstvo i evoliutsiia* (Moscow: Evraziia, 1995), 103. Kotz and Weir speak of a 'pro-capitalist coalition' (Kotz and Weir, *Revolution from Above*, ch. 7); Medvedev, however, believes the CPSU leadership 'lacked a clear programme' of this kind and in any case had limited control over developments (*Zdorov'e i vlast'*, 16).

<sup>52</sup> For Hungary, for instance, see Andras Bozoki, 'The Ideology of Modernization and the Policy of Materialism', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 13: 3 (Sept. 1997), 56–102, at p. 77.

<sup>53</sup> *Izvestiia*, 15 Jan. 1992, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 1, 1992, pp. 7–8.

<sup>55</sup> *Izvestiia*, 15 Feb. 1997, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> See respectively Andrei Grachev, *Da'she bez menia. Ukhod Prezidenta* (Moscow: Progress/Kul'tura, 1994), 9; and Golovachev *et al.*, 'Formirovanie', part 2, p. 36. Gaidar himself saw the post-communist changes as a 'revolution comparable in its influence on the historical process with the Great French Revolution, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949' (*Dni*

best described as a 'power metamorphosis': not a transition from one system to another but the resolution of an intra-systemic crisis and the revival of a system of authoritarian power, or (for others) a change from one system of exploitation to another, both of which could be defined as capitalism.<sup>57</sup> There was no dramatic *Wendepunkt*, at least none that was comparable with the breaching of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 or the overthrow and execution of the Ceauşescus; a referendum in March 1991 had confirmed the popularity of the USSR as a 'renewed federation', there was little popular resistance to the attempted coup in August 1991, and there was little support for the hasty decision to terminate the USSR the following December—an 'elite pact' of a rather particular kind, conducted by a Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, who was in no position to reason clearly (according to participants he was 'so drunk he fell out of his chair') and who had in any case no prior commitment to the dissolution of the union.<sup>58</sup> The crisis in the USSR was a longer-term and more systemic one, reflected in falling rates of economic growth and a gap between regime and society that had been widening for decades, and it persisted after December 1991, particularly in the continuing confrontation between President Yeltsin and a largely Communist parliament. Arguably, it persisted even longer, with an economy that was continuing to contract, a population that had little confidence in its post-communist institutions, and a constitution that was still contested because of the manner in which it had been imposed in December 1993 after the parliament had been bombarded into submission.

The ambiguous nature of regime change in Russia was paralleled by the partial nature of the elite change that accompanied it. Initially, President Yeltsin was determined to appoint ministers who had no career association with the Gorbachev administration; this left him with a very limited pool from which to select his early governments, and they were dominated as a result by politically inexperienced academics who soon found that the 'experience of running a scientific laboratory' was 'no preparation for the management of a country [or] a region'.<sup>59</sup> But there was much less change in the presidential administration, which used the same buildings and enjoyed the same facilities as the party appara-

*porazhenii i pobed* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996), 8); Western social scientists have been more sceptical (see e.g. Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), ch. 7, and particularly his reference to Samuel Eisenstadt's 'resounding maybe' on p. 233).

<sup>57</sup> For the term 'power metamorphosis' see Erszebet Szalai, as quoted by Bill Lomax in Gordon Wightman (ed.), *Party Formation in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995), 178. Tat'iana Zaslavskaja, 'Chelovek v reformiruemom rossiiskom obshchestve', *Obshchestvo i ekonomika*, 9 (1995), 3–12, refers to a transition from one form of capitalism to another within the context of a 'social formation' approach (p. 11).

<sup>58</sup> David Remnick, *Resurrection* (New York: Random House, 1997), 27. Yeltsin's bodyguard and confidant confirmed there had been no prior commitment to dissolve the USSR: Aleksandr Korzhakov, *Boris El'tsin: ot rassveta do zakata* (Moscow: Interbuk, 1997), 127.

<sup>59</sup> Kostikov, *Roman s Prezidentom*, 271; and on the question of their previous experience Vadim Bakatin in *Novoe vremia*, no. 16, 1997, p. 16.

tus it had displaced,<sup>60</sup> and much less in the regions, where local first secretaries were able to sustain their position and in most cases secure legitimation through the ballot box as voters looked for experienced politicians who knew how things were done, whatever their ideology or former career. Indeed, given the CPSU's monopoly of positions of political influence up to the end of the 1980s and the absence of church, trade-union, business, or other counter-elites, there were no other sources from which a post-communist leadership could easily be drawn; and after the crisis of late 1993 and the shock of the election result that followed it Yeltsin began to recruit again in a more balanced way, ending the 'anti-Gorbachev cadre "blockade"' that had marked his first years of office and leaving only a few of the reformist intellectuals who had occupied many of the most influential positions in government and within his own administration.<sup>61</sup>

The outcome, by the late 1990s, was a complex mixture of the old and the new. The leading figures in Russia's post-communist politics had often, even typically, been members of the Gorbachev *nomenklatura*; at the same time their views and affiliations had changed, and their position was now dependent on a popular mandate rather than the directives of a monopolistic party. On the other hand, government was accountable to the president rather than to an elected parliament, and there were few effective mechanisms to hold the president or individual ministers to account if ordinary Russians wished to challenge their actions—as, for instance, in the case of the war in Chechnia in 1994–6. Russians were the least satisfied of all the post-communist publics with the freedoms they now enjoyed, and few thought they had more influence over the government that spoke in their name than in the years of communist rule: indeed, large numbers thought their influence had actually declined.<sup>62</sup> The elite, for its part, had shifted from power to property: and yet power retained its importance, as it was political power rather than the courts that protected the process by which public assets had been privatized, a process that both its supporters and opponents saw as more of a political than an economic exercise.<sup>63</sup> That, in turn, placed limits on democratic change, as those who had gained from the transition to post-communism could scarcely allow the ballot box to threaten their newly acquired property, or even their liberty ('why risk everything just to have some people put pieces of paper into something called a ballot box?', as Yeltsin's closest associate told journalists in the spring of

<sup>60</sup> The presidential administration, it emerged, used the same ticket office as the Central Committee had employed (*Argumenty i fakty—Moskva*, no. 48, 1996, p. 4); and it enjoyed the same services from the Fourth Division of the Ministry of Health (*ibid.*, no. 45, 1995, p. 13).

<sup>61</sup> Kostikov, *Roman s Prezidentom*, 271.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Rose and Christian Haerpfer, *New Russia Barometer III: The results* (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 228, 1994), 28 (6% of a representative national sample thought their influence on government had increased since the 'communist period', 20% thought it had become less, and 48% thought it was 'much the same').

<sup>63</sup> See e.g. Aleksei Ulukaev, *Reforming the Russian Economy, 1991–1995* (London: Centre for Research into Post-Communist Economies, 1996), and Joseph R. Blasi *et al.*, *Kremlin Capitalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), as cited in *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50: 1 (Jan. 1998), 155.

1996).<sup>64</sup> The presidential elections of that year were nearly cancelled for such reasons, and when they took place the Yeltsin campaign was able to rely upon the unstinting support of leading bankers and industrialists, to an extent that took them well beyond the permitted limits of campaign expenditure (his supporters had already made it clear that Yeltsin would in any case remain president ‘one way or the other’).<sup>65</sup>

An influential tradition in social theory has associated the establishment of liberal democracy with the dominance of a capitalist class—‘no bourgeois, no democracy’, in the words of Barrington Moore.<sup>66</sup> And for many, the emergence of a group of powerful and monied ‘new Russians’ was a hopeful development in this sense: once they had secured their own positions, it was thought, a newly dominant group of this kind would have every reason to favour a rule of law and other changes that would minimize the unpredictability of their environment, which in turn would lead to a more regular and ‘democratic’ political process. The experience of early post-communist Russia suggested that such expectations might be misplaced, or at least premature. It was a society, in the words of sociologist Tat’iana Zaslavskaja, that was dominated by a ‘renewed oligarchy’ consisting of the ‘most entrepreneurial or lucky section of the *nomenklatura*’, who commanded ‘no less power and a much greater share of social wealth’ than their communist predecessors. And it was simply ‘unrealistic’ to believe that a grouping of this kind, among whom there ‘were not and had never been any democrats, nor even many liberals’, would be willing to share with ordinary people the power and wealth they had divided among themselves through the privatization of state property.<sup>67</sup> The communist elite had enjoyed a political monopoly, but had been persuaded to share it in the face of popular pressure for political change and the availability of an ‘exit’ into private property. Their post-communist successors faced a sterner challenge, in that they risked dispossession and even judicial proceedings if they were removed from government by an electoral process to which they had only a conditional attachment; at the same time they had to commit themselves to ‘democracy’ as the principle on which their rule was based, just as their predecessors had been committed to ‘communism’, whether or not their beliefs and behaviour had any relationship to the establishment of a classless society.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Korzhakov, as quoted in Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham NJ: Chatham House, 1997), 254.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 254–5; an inside view of the campaign is available in Korzhakov, *Boris El'tsin*.

<sup>66</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 418. For a larger reconsideration of these issues see Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

<sup>67</sup> T. I. Zaslavskaja, ‘Problema demokraticheskoi pereorientatsii ekonomiki sovremennoi Rossii’, *Obshchestvo i ekonomika*, no. 1–2, 1997, pp. 51–7, at pp. 54, 56.

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*List of Individuals Interviewed for the Soviet Elite Project*

- AKULINTSEV, V. K., first sec., Karaganda region, 1968–79; full mem., 1971–81.
- ALESHIN, G. V., first sec., Novosibirsk city, 1979–85 and second sec., Estonian republican organization from 1985; cand. mem., 1986–90.
- AMEL'KO, N. N., dep. commander-in-chief of the Navy 1969–78, and dep. chief of the General Staff 1978–86; cand. mem., 1966–71.
- ANTONOV, A. K., minister of the electronics industry 1965–80, and dep. prime minister 1980–8; cand. mem. 1961–71, full mem. 1971–89.
- ANTONOV, S. A., metalworker; full mem. 1966–71.
- BAIBAKOV, N. K., chairman of Gosplan 1965–86; full mem. 1952–61 and 1966–89.
- BAKLANOV, O. D., minister of general engineering 1983–8 and CC sec. 1988–91; full mem. 1986–91.
- BASHIKOV, S. V., minister of construction for the Far East 1979–83, chairman of the State Construction Committee and minister of construction for heavy industry 1983–6; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–9.
- BATALIN, Iu. P., chairman of the State Labour Committee 1983–5, dep. prime minister and chairman of the State Construction Committee 1986–9; full mem. 1986–90.
- BELIAK, K. N., minister of livestock fodder equipment production 1973–86; cand. mem. 1976–81, full mem. 1981–6.
- BELIAKOV, O. S., head of the defence industry department of the CC from 1985; full mem. 1986–90.
- BELOUSOV, I. S., minister of the shipping industry 1984–8, and dep. prime minister from 1988; full mem. 1986–90.
- BODIUL, I. I., first sec. of the Moldovian party organization 1961–80, and dep. prime minister 1980–5; full mem. 1961–86.
- BORODIN, L. A., first sec. Astrakhan region 1967–88; cand. mem. 1971–9, full mem. 1979–89.
- BRATCHENKO, B. F., minister of the coal industry, 1965–85; full mem. 1966–71, cand. mem. 1971–86.
- BUSYGIN, M. I., minister of timber, paper, and woodworking industry 1982–8 and minister of the timber industry 1988–9; cand. mem. 1986–90.
- CHERNYI, A. K., first sec. Khabarovsk territory 1970–88; full mem. 1971–89.
- DEMICHEV, P. N., minister of culture 1974–86; full mem. 1961–89.
- DINKOV, B. A., minister of the gas industry 1981–5 and minister of the oil industry 1985–9; full mem. 1986–90.
- DOBRIK, V. F., first sec. Ivano-Frankovsk region 1969–73 and of Lvov region 1973–87; cand. mem. 1966–71, full mem. 1971–89.
- DOLGIKH, V. I., CC sec. 1972–88; full mem. 1971–89.
- DYMSHITS, V. E., chairman of the State Committee on Material-Technical Supply 1965–76; full mem. 1961–81.
- EGORYCHEV, N. G., first sec. Moscow city 1962–7; full mem. 1961–71.
- EZHEVSKII, A. A., minister of tractor and agricultural machinery 1980–8; cand. mem. 1966–71, full mem. 1971–89.
- GALANSHIN, K. I., first sec. Perm' region 1960–8, and minister of the pulp and cellulose industry 1968–80; full mem. 1961–81.

- GLUSHKOV, N. T., chairman of the State Prices Committee 1975–86; cand. mem. 1986–90.
- GLUSHKOVA, E., wife of N. T. Glushkov.
- GOLDIN, N. V., minister of construction of heavy industrial enterprises 1967–86; full mem. 1971–86.
- GORCHAKOV, P. A., chief of the political administration of the Strategic Rocket Forces 1970–84; cand. mem. 1971–86.
- GUSEV, V. K., first sec. Saratov region 1976–85 and dep. prime minister of the Russian Republic 1985–90; full mem. 1981–90.
- GUZHENKO, T. B., minister of the merchant marine 1970–86; cand. mem. 1971–6, full mem. 1976–89.
- KALASHNIKOV, V. I., first sec. Volgograd region 1984–90; full mem. 1986–90.
- KAPITONOV, I. V., first sec. Moscow city 1952–4 and of Moscow region 1954–9, first sec. of Ivanovo region 1959–64, head of the Department of Organizational–Party Work of the CC 1964–5 and CC sec. 1965–83; full mem. 1952–86.
- KAPTO, A. S., sec. of the Ukrainian CC to 1986, ambassador to Cuba 1986–8 and head of the Ideology Department of the CC from 1988; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–9.
- KARAEV, G. A., minister of construction 1967–86; cand. mem. 1971–6, full mem. 1976–86.
- KAZANETS, I. P., minister of ferrous metallurgy 1965–85; cand. mem. 1956–61, full mem. 1961–86.
- KHRUSHCHEV, N. S., grandson of N. S. Khrushchev.
- KLIUEV, V. G., first sec. Ivanovo region 1972–8, and minister of light industry 1985–9; full mem. 1976–89.
- KOLMOGOROV, G. D., chairman of the State Standards Committee from 1984; cand. mem. 1986–90.
- KOLOMIETS, F. S., chairman of the Krasnodar territorial executive 1960–2 and first sec. Western Kazakhstan territory from 1962; cand. mem. 1961–6.
- KOLPAKOV, S. V., dep. and first dep. minister of ferrous metallurgy 1978–85, minister 1985–9; full mem., 1986–9.
- KOMAROV, N. D., first dep. minister of foreign trade 1980–7; cand. mem. 1981–9.
- KONOTOP, V. I., first sec. of Moscow region 1964–85; cand. mem. 1961–6, full mem. 1966–81.
- KOSOLAPOV, R. I., editor of *Kommunist* 1976–86; cand. mem. 1976–81, full mem. 1981–6.
- KOZLOV, N. T., chairman of Moscow regional executive 1963–80 and minister of the food and vegetable industry 1980–5; cand. mem. 1966–71, full mem. 1971–86.
- KOZLOVSKII, E. A., minister of geology from 1975; cand. mem. 1976–90.
- LISTOV, V. V., minister of the chemical industry 1980–6; cand. mem. 1981–9.
- LOGUNOV, A. A., rector of Moscow University 1977–91; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–90.
- LOSHCHENKO, F. I., first sec. Iaroslavl' region 1961–86; cand. mem. 1961–76, full mem. 1976–89.
- MAKEEV, V. N., dep. chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers 1980–3; full mem. 1976–86.
- MAL'KOV, N. I., first sec. Magadan region 1978–86 and first sec. Chita region 1986–90; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–91.

- MASLENNIKOV, N. I., first sec. Gor'kii region 1968–74 and chairman of Gosplan of the Russian Republic from 1974–89; full mem. 1971–90.
- MATSEVICH, V. V., minister of agriculture 1965–73 and ambassador to Czechoslovakia 1973–80; full mem. 1956–61, 1966–81.
- MEDVEDEV, V. A., CC Sec. 1986–8; full mem. 1986–9.
- NOVIKOV, V. N., chairman of Gosplan 1960–6; full mem. 1961–81.
- NURIEV, V. N., first sec. of the Bashkir region 1957–69, minister of procurements 1969–73 and dep. chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers 1973–85; full mem. 1961–81.
- ONIKOV, L. A., consultant, Propaganda Department, CPSU CC.
- PERVYSHIN, E. K., minister of the communications industry 1974–91; cand. mem. 1976–86, full mem. 1986–90.
- PETROVICHEV, N. A., first dep. head of the Department of Organizational-Party Work of the CPSU CC 1968–83; cand. mem. 1971–81, full mem. 1981–6.
- POLIAKOV, V. N., minister of the automobile industry 1976–86; cand. mem. 1976–81, full mem. 1981–9.
- POLIANSKII, D. S., first sec. Crimean region and Orenburg region 1953–7, first sec. Krasnodar territory 1957–8, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Republic 1958–62, dep. and first dep. chairman of the Council of Ministers 1962–73, minister of agriculture 1973–6, ambassador to Japan 1976–82 and to Norway 1982–7; full mem. 1956–81.
- POLOZKOV, I. K., first sec. Krasnodar territory 1985–90 and first sec. Russian republican organization 1990–1; full mem. 1986–91.
- PONOMAREV, B. N., head of the International Department 1955–61 and CC sec. 1961–86; cand. mem. 1952–6, full mem. 1956–89.
- POPOV, B. V., first sec. Archangel region 1971–81; cand. mem. 1971–6, full mem. 1981–6.
- POPOV, F. V., minister of housing and communal property of the Russian Republic 1983–5 and first sec. Altai region 1985–90; full mem. 1986–9.
- PROMYSLOV, V. F., chairman of the executive of Moscow city soviet 1966–86; full mem. 1966–86.
- PUGIN, N. A., minister of the automobile industry 1986–8 and of automobile and agricultural engineering 1988–91; full mem. 1986–90.
- RIABOV, Ia. P., first sec. Sverdlovsk region 1971–6, CC sec. 1976–9, first dep. chairman of Gosplan 1979–83, chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations 1983–4, dep. prime minister 1984–6, ambassador to France 1986–90; full mem. 1971–89.
- RIABOVA, T. I., wife of Ia. P. Riabov.
- RUBEN, V. P., chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet from 1974; cand. mem. 1966–76, full mem. 1976–86.
- SEMICHASTNYI, V. E., chairman of the KGB 1961–7 and dep. chairman of the Council of Ministers in the Ukraine 1967–81; cand. mem. 1956–64, full mem. 1964–71.
- SHAMSHIN, V. A., minister of communications 1980–9; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–90.
- SHAPIRO, L. B., first sec. of the Jewish autonomous region 1970–87; cand. mem. 1981–9.
- SHELEST, P. E., first sec. Ukrainian party organization 1963–72, and dep. chairman USSR Council of Ministers 1972–3; full mem. 1961–76.



- SHITOV, A. I., second sec. of the Tajik party organization 1970–5, and first dep. chairman of the People's Control Committee from 1975; cand. mem. 1971–90.
- SOLOMENTSEV, M. S., prime minister of the Russian Republic 1971–83 and chairman of the Committee of Party Control 1983–8; full mem. 1961–89.
- STUKALIN, B. I., chairman of the Press Committee attached to the Council of Ministers 1970–2, chairman of the State Publishing Committee 1972–82, head of the Propaganda Department of the CPSU CC 1982–5, and ambassador to Hungary from 1985; full mem. 1976–89.
- SYSTOV, A. S., minister of the aviation industry 1985–91; full mem. 1986–9.
- TEVOSIAN, V. I., son of I. F. Tevosian.
- TRET'IAKOV, P. I., first sec. Sakhalin region 1978–88; cand. mem. 1981–6, full mem. 1986–9.
- VLASOV, A. V., first sec. Chechen–Ingush regional organization 1975–84, first sec. Rostov region 1984–6, minister of internal affairs 1986–8, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Republic 1988–90, head of the socio-economic department of the CC 1990–1; cand. mem. 1976–81, full mem. 1981–90.
- VOLODIN, B. M., chairman of the Rostov-on-Don executive 1984–6; full mem. 1986–9.
- VORONOV, G. I., first sec. Chita region 1948–55, dep. minister of agriculture 1955–7, first sec. of Orenburg region 1957–61, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Republic 1962–71, chairman of the People's Control Committee 1971–3; full mem. 1952–76.
- VOROTNIKOV, V. I., first sec. of Voronezh region 1971–5, first dep. chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers 1975–9, ambassador to Cuba 1979–82, first sec. Krasnodar territory 1982–3, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Republic 1983–8; full mem. 1971–89.
- VSEVOLOZHSKII, M. N., first sec. Zaporozh'e region 1966–81; cand. mem. 1966–76, full mem. 1976–86.
- ZHURIN, N. I., first sec. Akmolinsk region 1951–8, first sec. North Kazakhstan region 1958–64, and first sec. Aktiubinsk region 1964–72; cand. mem. 1956–61, 1966–76.
- ZIMIANIN, M. V., ambassador to North Vietnam 1956–7 and to Czechoslovakia 1960–5, editor of *Pravda* 1965–76, and CC sec. 1967–87; full mem. 1952–6, 1966–90.

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# Index

- Abalkin, Leonid I. 202–3  
 Abel'guzina, Galina M. 235  
 Abobakimov, Obidzhon O. 206  
 Adzhubei, Aleksei I. 139, 152, 260  
 Afanas'ev, Sergei A. 201  
 Alekseevskii, Evgenii E. 262  
 Allilueva, Nadezhda 59  
 Andreev, Andrei A. 21, 24–8, 57–9, 77, 117, 121, 145, 261, 269, 280  
 Andropov, Iurii V. 193, 199, 217, 270  
 Antonov, Sergei F. 188  
 Apanasenko, General Iosif R. 96  
 Arbatov, Georgii A. 187, 262–3  
 Ariukhina, Aleksandra V. 39, 79  
 Arutinov, Georgii A. 132  
 Avtorkhanov, Abdurakhman 161
- Babaev, Sukhan 139  
 Badaev, Aleksei E. 80  
 Bagirov, Mir D. 72, 132  
 Bagramian, Ivan Kh. 172  
 Baibakov, Nikolai K. 119–26, 146–7, 201, 271, 281, 282  
   on Khrushchev 162–3  
 Bailes, Kendall 116  
 Bairamkulova, Zukhra A. 206  
 Balandin, Vasilii 177  
 Balitskii, Vasilii A. 50  
 Baranov, Petr I. 49  
 Bashtaniuk, Gennadii S. 172  
 Bauman, Karl I. 42  
 Belov, Vasilii I. 206  
 Berezin, Anatolii I. 228  
 Beria, Lavrentii P. 80, 92, 132  
 Berkman, Alexander 256
- Bikkenin, Nail B. 206  
 Bliukher, Vasilii K. 49, 71, 72, 73  
 Boldin, Valerii I. 203, 237  
 Borovoi, Konstantin N. 296  
 Bourdieu, Pierre 290  
 Bratchenko, Boris F. 186–7  
 Brekhov, Konstantin I. 188  
 'Brezhnev generation' 80, 133, 134  
 Brezhnev, Iurii L. 261  
 Brezhnev, Leonid I. 156, 178, 180, 184, 210–11, 261, 263, 269, 281  
   praise of at Central Committee 192–3  
   rivalry with Kosygin 271–2  
   rivalry with Podgornyi 272  
 Brutents, Karen N. 263  
 Bubnov, Andrei S. 49  
 Budennyi, Semen M. 49, 80  
 Bukharin, Nikolai I. 38, 39, 40, 41, 70, 73, 84, 246  
 Bulganin, Nikolai A. 72, 145, 159  
 Bulin, Anton S. 42, 49, 72  
 Burlatskii, Fedor M. 144  
 Burmistenko, Mikhail A. 96  
 Butoma, Boris E. 262  
 Buzgalin, Anatolii V. 235, 265–6
- Central Committee:  
   before 1917 2  
   election of 283–4  
   as elite vi–viii  
   frequency of meetings of 285–6  
   generations in xi–xii, 275–6, 278–83  
   interviews of members of xiii–xiv  
   and job-slots x–xi  
   and 'Komsomol economy' 295–302

Central Committee (*cont.*):

- and party decision-making ix
- and postcommunist period 288–302
- privilege within 256–74
- representative character of 242–56
- role of plenum of 286–7
- size of 243–4
- sources on xii–xvi
- Stalin on viii, 41, 65, 239
- turnover in x, 278–83
- see also* Central Committee in particular periods

## Central Committee, in Brezhnev period

- 167–94
- activity levels of 186–94
- birthplace of members of 176
- diplomatic representation on 173–4
- educational level of 173
- ethnic composition of 175–6
- gender composition of 172–3
- generational composition of 170–2, 174
- job-slot composition of 171, 173–4
- military representation on 186
- size of 169–70
- turnover 170, 171

## Central Committee, in early Stalinist

- period, 34–90
- activity levels of 64
- age of 52–4, 82
- character of 50–56
- educational level of 55
- ethnic composition of 54
- formation of 38–41
- generational composition of 82–3
- job-slot composition of 41–50
- national composition of 54, 80
- party entry date of 53–4
- political experience of 54
- and Purges 79–90
- repression of 76
- size of 35–6, 73
- social composition of 55
- turnover 36–8

## Central Committee, in Gorbachev period

- 195–240
- activity levels of 225–7

age of 207

birthplace of members of 208–9

commissions of 224–5

divisions within 237–9

educational level of 206

ethnic composition of 206–7

failure to democratize 233–7

formation of 198–200; Gorbachev's  
plans to reform 199–200, 202–3; in  
1990 202–4

gender composition of 206

generational composition of 207–9

influence of 233–40

job-slot composition of 204–6

mass resignation from (1989) 200–2

political character of 238–40

reform of 219–25

size of 197, 201

turnover 197–8

## Central Committee, in Khrushchev period

- 136–66
- activity levels of 153–66
- 'anti-party group' within 158–60
- diplomatic representation on 141
- educational levels of 143–4
- generational composition of 142–3
- job-slot composition of 139–42
- plenum of October 1964 160
- size of 138–9
- 'token' representation on 141
- turnover 138–9, 144

## Central Committee, in late Stalinist period

- 91–135
- activity levels of 126–35
- age of 105–8
- educational level of 113–17
- ethnic composition of 108–9
- gender composition of 109
- generational composition of 105–8,  
133–5
- job-slot composition of 98–103
- military representation on 101–2
- and Second World War 94, 96
- size of 98, 103–4
- social composition of 109–13
- turnover 93–8

- Central Committee, in revolutionary  
 period 1–33  
 activity levels of 28–33  
 character of 8–14, 20–1, 32–3  
 and civil war 19–20  
 educational levels of 17–18  
 ethnic composition of 15–16  
 formation of 4–5  
 generational composition of 14–15  
 job-slot composition of 5–8  
 plenums of 30–2  
 and Purges 20  
 size of 2–3  
 social origins of 17  
 and Tsarist rule 18–19  
 turnover 4
- Chakovskii, Alexander B. 239, 240
- Chaplin, Nikolai P. 216
- Chase, William 79
- Chazov, Evgenii I. 199
- Chernenko, Konstantin U. 193, 261
- Chernov, Mikhail A. 73
- Chicherin, Georgii V. 6, 49
- Chudov, Mikhail S. 71
- Chuikov, Vasilii I. 172
- Churbanov, Iurii M. 261
- Chuvyrin, Mikhail E. 80
- Ciliga, Ante 257, 259
- Communist Party of the Soviet Union:  
 in late Soviet period, 227–30  
 proposals for reform of 230–3
- Conquest, Robert 79, 80, 144
- Coolidge, Calvin 53
- Daniels, Robert V. 10, 51, 81, 111–12,  
 116  
 on job-slot system x, 5, 42
- Daulenov, Sal'ken D. 139
- Deribas, Terentii D. 50
- Djilas, Milovan 260, 278
- Dobrik, Viktor F. 210–13, 219, 282, 283
- Dobrynin, Anatolii F. 174
- Dolgikh, Vladimir I. 201
- Dunham, Vera 112–13
- Dzasokhov, Alexander S. 263, 294–5
- Dzerzhinskii, Feliks E. 38, 49
- Efimov, Nikolai I. 206
- Egorov, Alexander I. 49, 73
- Egorychev, Nikolai G. 147–52, 163, 282  
 at June 1967 plenum 187–8
- Eikhe, Robert I. 73
- Eliava, Shalva Z. 70
- Elite:  
 defined vi–viii  
 evolution over time 276–88  
 in postcommunist period 288–302  
 turnover in x  
*see also* Central Committee
- Elwood, Carter 10
- Enukidze, Avel S. 44, 69, 257
- Epishev, Aleksei A. 184
- Evdokimov, Grigorii E. 39, 68, 69, 76
- Ezhov, Nikolai I. 42, 72, 85
- Figatner, Iu. Iu. 9, 111
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila 19, 81–2, 114, 116
- Furtseva, Ekaterina A. 117, 172
- Gaidar, Egor T. 298–9
- Gamarnik, Ian B. 42, 49
- Gapurov, Mukhamednazar G. 169
- Gelman, Alexander I. 228
- Generations, in Soviet politics xi–xii
- Getty, J. Arch 79
- Gidasov, Boris V. 236
- Gill, Graeme 8, 84, 164
- Goglidze, Sergei A. 132
- Goldin, Nikolai V. 188
- Goldman, Emma 256
- Golubeva, Mariia A. 172
- Golubeva, Valentina N. 172
- Gorbachev, Mikhail S. 193, 238, 283, 296  
 attitude of Central Committee towards  
 239  
 on the Central Committee viii, 239  
 and mass resignation of April 1989  
 200–2  
 on party reform 222, 223–4  
 policies of 195–7  
 and privilege 263, 267–8  
 and reform of the Central Committee  
 199–200



- Gorbachev, Mikhail S. (*cont.*):  
     social interaction of 269–71  
 Gorchakov, Petr A. 182–6, 190, 282  
     on Brezhnev, 185  
     on Khrushchev 185  
 Govorov, Marshal Leonid A. 260  
 Govorov, General Vladimir L. 260  
 Graham, Loren 115–16  
 Grinko, Grigorii F. 73  
 Grishin, Viktor V. 193, 266, 274  
 Gromyko, Andrei A. x, 201, 262
- Hagen, Mark von 19  
 Haimson, Leopold 10  
 Haupt, Georges 20  
 Hayter, Sir William v  
 Hoover, Herbert 53  
 Hough, Jerry F. 10, 143  
 Hunter, Holland 52, 56
- Iagoda, Genrikh G. 49, 70, 73  
 Iagodkin, Gennadii A. 261–2  
 Iakir, Iona E. 49, 70, 77  
 Iakovlev, Alexander N. 218, 238  
 Iakovlevna, Varvara N. 15  
 Iavlinskii, Grigorii A. 299  
 Iazov, Dmitrii T. 204  
 Ignat'ev, S. P. 97, 132  
 Ikramov, Akmel I. 73  
 Inozemtsev, Nikolai N. 189  
 Isaev, Uraz D. 72  
 Ishkov, Alexander A. 262  
 Ivanov, Vladimir I. 73
- Kabakov, Ivan D. 70  
 Kadochnikov, Vladimir D. 234  
 Kaganovich, Lazar M. 40–1, 42, 61, 109,  
     122, 249, 260  
 Kaganovich, Mikhail M. 260  
 Kalashnikov, Vladimir V. 222, 235, 236  
 Kaliev, Zavyk 206  
 Kalinin, Mikhail I. 38, 39, 44, 59  
 Kalinina, Elena I. 206  
 Kalmanovich, Moisei I. 72  
 Kamenev, Lev B. 7, 39, 68, 69, 76, 246,  
     256
- Kaminskii, Grigorii N. 71  
 Kazakov, Leonid D. 172  
 Kazanets, Ivan P. 188  
 Keenan, Edward 7, 132  
 Kharitonov, M. M. 38  
 Khazan, Dora 25, 26, 58, 59, 118  
 Khodorkovskii, Mikhail 296, 298  
 Khrushchev, Nikita 73, 136–7, 223, 281  
     and 'Leninist norms' 130–1  
     on party apparat 165  
     policy style of 160–6  
     and 'secret speech' 66–7  
 Kirov, Sergei M. 40, 42, 47, 68, 257  
 Kirponos, General Mikhail P. 96  
 Knorin, Vil'gel'm G. 50  
 Kollontai, Aleksandra M. 13, 15, 79  
 Komsomol, and Central Committee 216  
 Korzhikhina, Tatiana P. 3, 111  
 Kosarev, Alexander V. 77, 216  
 Kosior, Iosif V. 72, 260  
 Kosior, Stanislav V. 73, 260  
 Kosygin, Aleksei N. 149, 269, 271, 281  
     relationship with Brezhnev 271–2  
 Kovalev, Mikhail P. 95, 96  
 Kozlov, Frol R. 149  
 Krestinskii, Nikolai N. 4, 21–4, 27–8, 30,  
     57, 63, 73, 76–7, 79, 246, 261, 280  
 Krupskaiia, Nadezhda K. 74, 260  
 Krzhizhanovskii, Gleb M. 80  
 Kubiak, Nikolai A. 72  
 Kuibyshev, Valerii V. 6  
 Kuklin, Aleksandr S. 68, 76  
 Kulik, General Grigorii I. 94  
 Kul'kov, Mikhail M. 72  
 Kunaev, Dinmukhamed A. 168, 169, 260,  
     261  
 Kuptsov, Valentin A. 263  
 Kutuzov, Ivan I. 11, 14  
 Kuusinen, Otto V. 159  
 Kuznetsov, Aleksei A. 94, 116, 132
- Lane, David 9–10, 16  
 Latsis, Otto P. 206  
 Lein, Vol'demar P. 188  
 Lenin, Vladimir I. 38, 223, 246, 257, 280  
     on party 'old guard' 21

- 'Leningrad affair' 94  
 Lewin, Moshe 19, 56, 86, 143, 164  
 Ligachev, Egor K. 217, 218, 226, 227, 236, 238–9  
 Listov, Vladimir V. 201  
 Litvinov, Maksim M. 80  
 Liubavin, P. M. 96  
 Liubchenko, Panas P. 57, 59–64, 72, 77–9, 84, 280  
 Logunov, Anatolii A. 226–7  
 Lominadze, Vissarion V. 67, 85  
 Lozovskii, Solomon A. 50, 72, 80, 94, 132  
 Luk'ianov, Anatolii I. 270  
  
 MacDonald, Ramsay 53  
 Makarov, Ivan G. 72  
 Malenkov, Georgii M. 130, 157, 159  
 Maniakin, Sergei I. 295  
 Manuil'skii, Dmitrii Z. 50, 80, 249  
 Marie, Jean-Jacques 20  
 Medunov, Sergei F. 193  
 Medvedev, Roi A. 40, 206, 235  
 Mekhlis Lev Z. 42, 72, 80, 109  
 Mel'nikov, Anatolii G. 222, 233  
 Mel'nikov, Leonid G. 157  
 Menzhinskii, Viacheslav R. 49  
 Merkulov, Vsevolod N. 132  
 Mezhlauk, Valentin I. 73  
 Mikhailov, Mikhail E. 72  
 Mikoian, Anastas I. 30–1, 145, 156, 161, 258, 269  
 Mironenko, Viktor I. 216  
 Mishin, Viktor M. 216–19, 273, 283  
     on Ligachev 218  
 Moiseev, Mikhail A. 204  
 Molotov, Viacheslav M. 6, 13, 40, 44, 53, 88, 99, 130, 144, 157, 246–7  
 Moore, Barrington 249  
 Mosse, Werner 11, 12, 17  
  
 Naumov, V. N. 164–5  
 Nazarbaev, Nursultan A. 214  
 Nenashev, Mikhail F. 227, 267  
 Neporozhnyi, Petr S. 188  
 Nikolaeva, Klavdiia I. 39, 79  
 nomenklatura system 258–9  
  
 Nosov, Ivan P. 72, 122  
 Novikov, Vladimir N. 147–52, 163, 282  
 Nuriev, Ziia N. 179–82, 190, 191, 282  
     on Brezhnev 182  
     on Khrushchev 181–2  
  
 Ogarkov, Marshal Nikolai V. 202, 208  
 Ordzhonikidze, Grigorii K. 38, 69  
 Orwell, George 276–7  
 Osinskii, Valentin V. 71  
  
 Pakhomov, Nikolai I. 72  
 Patolichev, Nikolai S. 119–26, 135, 146, 281, 282  
 Paton, Boris E. 197, 208  
 Pavlov, General Dmitrii G. 96  
 Pavlovskii, Ivan G. 188  
 Pel'she, Arvid I. 172, 261  
 Pervukhin, Mikhail G. 159  
 Pervyshin, Erlén K. 213–16, 219, 283  
 Peskov, Iurii A. 272–3  
 Petrovskii, Grigorii I. 71, 80  
 Piatakov, Georgii L. 39, 69  
 Piatnitskii, Iosif A. 50  
 Pikhoeia, R. G. 161  
 Pipes, Richard 9  
 Podgornyi, Nikolai V. 272  
 Poliakov, Vasilii I. 139  
 Polianskii, Dmitri S. 274  
 Popkov, Petr S. 94  
 Poskrybyshev, Alexander N. 42, 80  
 Postyshev, Pavel P. 73, 84  
 Pramnek, Eduard K. 72  
 Preobrazhenskii, Evgenii A. 68  
 Privilege 256–74  
     attitudes towards 273–4  
 Prokof'ev, Iurii A. 233  
 Psurtsev, Nikolai D. 215  
 Pugo, Boris K. 224  
 purges, and political elite 79–90  
  
 Radek, Karl B. 76  
 Rakhimbaev, Abdullo R. 14  
 Rakovskii, Khristian G. 73, 76, 247  
     on class nature of Soviet system 259  
 Rashidov, Sharaf R. 169

- Raskol'nikov, Fedor 89  
 Razumovskii, Georgii P. 201  
 Rigby, T. H. 11, 80, 144, 159  
 Riutin, Martemian N. 65, 68, 84  
 Rodionov, Mikhail I. 94, 132  
 Rozengol'ts, Arkadii P. 73  
 Rudakov, Alexander P. 139  
 Rudnev, Konstantin N. 262  
 Rudzutak, Ian E. 32, 44, 70  
 Rukhimovich, Moisei L. 73  
 Rumiantsev, Ivan P. 72  
 Rustamova, Kholbuvi 172  
 Rykov, Aleksei I. 38, 40, 44, 53, 70, 73, 84, 246  
 Ryndin, Kuz'ma V. 73  
 Ryvkin, Oskar 216  
 Ryzhkov, Nikolai I. 53, 270, 271, 272, 295  
  
 Saburov, Maksim Z. 146, 159  
 Safarov, Georgii I. 68  
 Samsonov, Iurii 264  
 Saponov, Timofei V. 38  
 Sedin, Ivan K. 123  
 Seleznev, Gennadii N. 295  
 Semenova, Galina V. 206  
 Semichastnyi, Vladimir E. 152  
 Senin, Ivan S. 250  
 Serebriakov, Leonid P. 76  
 Serebrovskii, Alexander P. 39  
 Sevast'ianov, N. F. 39  
 Shakhnazarov, Georgii Kh. viii, 239  
 Shakhurin, Aleksei I. 131–2  
 Shatalin, Nikolai N. 97, 132  
 Shatalin, Stanislav S. 228  
 Shatskii, Lazar' 216  
 Shchelokov, Nikolai A. 193  
 Shcherbitskii, Vladimir V. 169, 211  
 Shelest, Petr E. 210  
 Shenin, Oleg S. 224–5  
 Shevardnadze, Eduard A.:  
     on Brezhnev 192, 228  
 Sholokhov, Mikhail A. 174  
 Shvarts, Isaak I. 80  
 Shvernik, Nikolai M. 145  
 Siare, K. Ia. 96  
 Silaev, Ivan S. 228  
  
 Simonov, Konstantin M. 107  
 Sinitsyn, Ivan F. 188  
 Slavskii, Efim P. 172, 201, 262  
 Smorodin, Petr I. 72, 216  
 Sobchak, Anatolii A. 260  
 Sokol'nikov, Grigorii I. 32, 69, 247  
 Solomentsev, Mikhail S. 202  
 Sol'ts, Aaron 259  
 Stetskii, Aleksei I. 42  
 Struev, Alexander I. 188  
 Struppe, Petr I. 72  
 Sulimov, Daniel' E. 72  
 Suslov, Mikhail A. 156, 180, 261, 281  
 Smirnov, Ivan N. 31, 38, 68, 69, 76  
 Stasova, Elena D. 15, 30, 79  
 Syrtsov, Sergei I. 67  
 Szyrmer, Janusz 52, 56  
  
 Tarasov, Nikolai N. 188  
 Tatu, Michel 144  
 Tereshkova, Valentina V. 172  
 Tevosian, Vladimir 268–9  
 Tikhonov, Nikolai A. 53, 201  
 Tolokontsev, A. F. 39  
 Toms'kii, Mikhail P. 38, 40, 50, 69  
 Tovstukha, Ivan P. 42  
 Tret'iakov, Petr I. 202  
 Trotskii, Lev D. 6, 13, 38, 39, 65, 67–8, 76, 256, 257, 280  
     on social nature of Soviet system 259–60, 277  
 Tsetlin, Efim 216  
 Tsvigun, Semen K. 261  
 Tucker, Robert C.:  
     on Purges 81  
 Tukhachevskii, Mikhail N. 49, 70  
 turnover x  
     *see also* Central Committee  
  
 Uborevich, Ieronim P. 49, 70  
 Ugarov, Alexander I. 72  
 Ukhanov, Konstantin V. 70  
 Ul'ianov, Mikhail A. 206  
 Unshlikht, Iosif S. 49, 72  
 Urlanis, Boris xi  
 Usmanov, Gumer I. 236

- Ustinov, Dmitrii F. 149, 159  
 Usubaliev, Turdakun A. 169
- Varentsov, Marshal Sergei S. 139  
 Vagris, Jan 233  
 Vannikov, Boris L. 109  
 Vareikis, Iosif M. 57, 59–64, 77, 78, 79, 183, 247, 280  
 Vasilevskii, Marshal Alexander M. 268  
 Verkhovyykh, V. M. 40  
 Volkogonov, Dmitrii 81  
 Voroshilov, Kliment E. 49, 145, 159, 242–3  
 Vorotnikov, Vitalii I. 273  
 Vosnesenskii, Nikolai A. 94, 131, 132  
 Vsevolozhskii, Mikhail N. 176–9, 190, 282
- Yeltsin, Boris N. 204, 222–3, 225, 283, 295, 300
- Zalutskii, Petr A. 38, 68  
 Zatulin, Konstantin F. 296  
 Zelenskii, Isaak A. 72, 73  
 Zemliachka, Rozaliia S. 268  
 Zhdanov, Andrei A. 42, 110–11, 116, 127, 260, 269  
 Zhemchuzhina, Polina S. 260  
 Zhukov, General Georgii K. 97, 131, 133, 158  
     on Patolichev 123  
 Zhurin, Nikolai I. 147–52, 163, 282  
 Zinoviev, Grigorii E. 7, 29, 38, 39, 68, 69, 76  
 Ziuganov, Gennadii A. 283  
 Zor'kin, Valerii D. 267